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THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #82, February 9-23, 2006

a FREE paper for free people



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WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 120 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and place the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write and distribute for *The Independent*, videotape events and rallies, update the website, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

VOLUNTEER STAFF:

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First Person

My job is considered illegal by the City of New York. I am not selling drugs or peddling stolen merchandise. I am not a street performer, nor am I parading without a permit. I am not giving food to the poor. I pedal a bike for a living, a pedicab in a city where riding bikes is almost illegal – just ask anyone who rides with Critical Mass.

Pedicabs Face Midtown Ban

BY MICHAEL BIELAWSKI

A pedicab is a large tricycle with a rear seat for two or three adults and is used as a taxi and to give tours. With only about 400 pedicabs in operation, they've managed to avoid city regulation.

Our legal troubles have to deal with the regulation of our business, or rather lack of regulation by the city. We have always welcomed the idea of reasonable regulation, regarding rules we must follow on the road and requirements for drivers to get a license. Only recently has a city crackdown made the legalities an immediate question.

Workers generally lease their bike from one of several companies for a daily, weekly or monthly fee. About five percent own their own bikes. The industry arrived in New York eight years ago. It's a great job, with exercise and opportunities to meet people from all over the world, plus it pays the rent with charges running about one dollar per

block. They can be found near landmarks such as Central Park in the day and Times Square at night.

The Central Park rides are in direct competition with the traditional horse carriages and that's when the trouble came. Instead of friendly competition, the horse carriage companies have insisted pedicabs are illegal because we do not carry the vending license required to sell things in the city. We argue we are a service, and do not require a vending license, which doesn't apply to us even if we wanted it.

Then the Partybikes showed up, a new breed with room to pedal for up to seven people. The cops went crazy. Undercovers impounded the Partybikes, and some pedicabs were also taken as collateral damage. When the impounded vehicles made it to court, the judge ruled a vending license is now necessary despite eight years without them.

Don Domite, owner of the Partybikes and some pedicabs, says, "I feel my civil rights

were violated. They used every form of harassment they could."

According to pedicab owner Andy Arango, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) said that pedicabbers do not need a vending license. Pedicab owner Gregg Zukowski clarified: the DCA meant it was fine to own the pedicabs without a vending license but not to pedal them for business. Zukowski added that the DCA claims they will not fine pedicabs for vending without a license.

As if that's not all confusing enough, the City Council is getting in on the act. One reasonable bill would basically clear up the regulatory limbo, but another threatens the whole industry by proposing to ban all pedicabs from midtown. That's the prime turf, accounting for about 90 percent of all rides. If pedicabs are forced out of the tourist zone, what chance do we have of survival?

We are in the business of adding culture and romance, sans pollution, to a city that seems to be gaining a reputation as a police state.



PEDDLE TO THE PAVEMENT About 400 pedicabs operate in New York City. PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

LETTERS TO THE INDY

Send comments to: PO Box 1417, NYC 10276; email to imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org;
Or join the discussion on nyc.indymedia.org

MY SEX FANTASY WAS NOT A CRIME

The Nov. 9 issue of *The Independent* featured a headline that described sex offenders as "the worst of the worst." As someone who has been designated a level one sex offender (the lowest level) by the State of New York, I took exception to the words. Coming from a publication as progressive as *The Independent*, they struck me as an indication of how deeply certain attitudes towards sex have pervaded our culture in recent decades.

In 2003 an ex-girlfriend of mine informed police that I had child pornography on my computer. I was arrested under section 263.16 of the criminal code, "Possessing a Sexual Performance of a Child." It's worth noting that the very name of the law reveals the inherent dishonesty of the lawmakers. According to them I did not possess an image of a sexual performance, I possessed the performance itself. So, I am now in the third year of my ten-year probation sentence, which means that for the next seven years I am subject to surprise home visits from my probation officer, am not allowed to own a computer, and am not allowed to travel beyond the boundaries of New York City. I am also subject to a 6:00 curfew every Halloween and instructed not to answer the door to trick-or-treaters.

I don't consider myself in any way sexually atypical. The images I had on my computer were used to facilitate a sexual fantasy and sexual fantasy is by nature transgressive. How many people do you think close their eyes and dream of their lawfully wedded spouse in the missionary position when they masturbate?

The fact that most people are unwilling to admit even to themselves that what they find morally repugnant they also find sexually arousing, accounts for both the tabloid media's hysterical obsession with sex crimes and politicians' ability to use the specter of sex to strip us of our basic civil liberties.

Anonymous
New York, NY

SHEEHAN ARTICLE A "VILE SMEAR"

Nicholas Power's article "Antigone Now" (Dec. 8) is a truly vile smear on Cindy Sheehan, just about on par with Christopher Hitchens' calling Mrs. Sheehan a "sob sister" or Karl Rove's using the word "clown."

Ms. Sheehan has lost her child in a miserable, unjust war of aggression, and I am in deep admiration for her efforts to keep other families from enduring the grief she's going through. Powers uses Ms. Sheehan's statement, "sometime I'm mad at Casey" as a means to dismiss her – apparently unaware of the conflicting emotions that any loving parent in such a situation would experience. He then sneers at Sheehan because she "can enjoy the ease of speaking for the void." Cindy Sheehan is speaking for herself – and for hundreds of thousands of others, including me – who oppose America's misuse of power and indeed mourn the victims, including the dead soldiers, of this war.

Eleanor Bell
New York, NY

THE PEOPLES LAWYER IS A COMMIE PLOT

I read the article "The Boss Is Back" (Jan. 12) by The People's Lawyer, Ann Schneider. I do not trust you. I think you have some sort of ideological background, which makes me feel you are untrustworthy toward America.

Of course, I do not want the NYPD to turn New York City into a police state. I value open democracy. Muslim terrorists do not value democracy. Muslim terrorists tried to destroy New York in 2001. Do you fucking realize that? That's why some espionage is necessary.

My father was a U.S. spy from 1945 to 1947 who helped send Nazi officers to prison. That was worthwhile. The reality is spying is also done against Ku Klux Klan groups and extreme rightwing Christians. So who the fuck are you kidding? Certainly not me. Do you have anything to hide... Perhaps books defending Fidel Castro? I suspect your organization has many ultra leftwing Jews. I only trust moderates and you are no moderate.

P.S. I will report you to State Senator Balboni.

T. Stevens
Sunnyside, Queens

CORRECTION:

An article in the Jan. 12 *Independent* ("Ariel Sharon's Life of Crime") incorrectly attributed to Sharon a quote from a 1982 interview that Amos Oz did with an Israeli soldier.



Tenant Groups Pressure Banks to Enforce Repairs

BY BENNETT BAUMER

No hot water? Having trouble getting your landlord to make repairs? Housing groups from around the city are addressing these questions by pressuring the New York Community Bank (NYCB) to do a better job of monitoring the conditions in the buildings where it holds mortgages.

Housing advocates are taking it to the bank at the right time. NYCB needs government approval to acquire Atlantic Bank of New York, in a deal that would increase NYCB's share of the "multi-family building" market from \$9.8 billion to \$12.25 billion. Housing groups hope that NYCB will intervene with the worst landlords so that the buildings do not lose value. NYCB is a major player in offering loans to landlords with rent-regulated buildings and there are clauses in the mortgages that require the properties be kept in good repair.

"I have repairs that have not been made. I got a window that is coming out of its frame," said tenant Yvonne White of 2239 Creston Ave. in the Bronx. "The bank that is holding the mortgage on my building needs to do something." Victor Fein, the landlord, has a mortgage with NYCB, and the building has 324 outstanding violations, an average of 12 violations per apartment.

According to "Banking on Despair," a report by the Housing Here and Now coalition, an umbrella group that includes Met Council on Housing [where the author is employed], "At least 231 buildings mortgaged by NYCB counted 3.0 or more Department of Housing and Preservation Development (HPD) violations per unit. At least 12 landlords named on HPD's 2003 Major Problem Owner list were NYCB borrowers."

Housing Here and Now recommends that government regulators deny NYCB's bid to buy Atlantic Bank of New York if it cannot

enforce its good-repair clauses.

In 1977, Congress passed the Community Reinvestment Act to curtail discriminatory banking practices – known as "redlining," after the practice of drawing red lines around low-income neighborhoods on a map and denying loans on buildings inside that line.

The act requires borrowers to maintain their collateral by keeping up the buildings' infrastructure. As part of enforcing the act and the good-repair clause in mortgages, tenants want NYCB to conduct more inspections and oblige landlords to remedy violations.

"Over the past five years, we have financed well over \$10 billion of loans to local real estate markets, primarily for the renovation and upgrade of properties," NYCB responded in an unsigned statement. "We have been recognized for our service to New York with an 'Outstanding' Community Reinvestment Act designation, the highest level of ranking."

GOING AFTER THE LANDLORDS

Tenants often must go to extreme measures to force landlords to make even the simplest repairs. When calling the city's 311 hotline to request an HPD inspection or applying for a rent reduction from the state is unsuccessful, tenants have resorted to more direct tactics.

This past September, a couple busloads of mostly Black and Latino tenants from Bronx buildings owned by Moshe "Morris" Piller took a trip to the landlord's plush home in the Hasidic enclave of Borough Park, Brooklyn. Piller has been on HPD's Major Problem Owner list, and some of his buildings average more than 10 violations per apartment. Piller is also a NYCB borrower.

"When we first got there, we started attracting attention," said Jackie Del Valle of CASA, a project of New Settlement, a Bronx-based organization that participates in Fix It Now, a campaign to draw attention to slum conditions. "We marched to his [Piller's] house and a lot of people in the neighborhood gathered around across the street."

As tenants ended their action in front of the landlord's house and headed back to the buses, some of the spectators began throwing eggs at them.

Met Council executive director Jenny Laurie recalls tangling with Piller while working with tenants in some of his buildings in Brooklyn. "Instead of agreeing to make repairs in court, they stonewalled the tenants for six months, making life as difficult as possible," she says.

PREDATORY LENDER SIGNS SETTLEMENT

Ameriquest Mortgage Company, accused of predatory lending practices affecting many New Yorkers, signed a \$325 million settlement last month with the California attorney general's office. The attorney general cited Ameriquest for regularly failing to disclose prepayment penalties, inflating appraisals and distorting buyers' credit ratings. New York State Attorney General Elliot Spitzer estimates that 22,000 New Yorkers are eligible for payments of up to \$1,000. A week after signing the settlement, Ameriquest parent company, ACC Capital Holdings, laid off 16 percent of 4,000 employees in one subsidiary because of "a more challenging economic environment," according to *MortgageChronicle.com*. Others feel the layoffs are to cover the settlement, the second-largest involving predatory lending.

WISE GUY'S FRIENDS CHIP IN

Alleged Gambino crime family "button man" Michael "Mickey Y" Yannotti got a boost from a \$1,000-a-plate fundraiser to pay his attorney fees. A judge recently acquitted Yannotti and co-defendant John Gotti Jr. of the 1992 attempted murder of Guardian Angel and radio host, Curtis Sliwa. According to reporter Jerry Capeci, 200-300 of Yannotti's friends and associates attended the affair in Mill Basin, Brooklyn, which raised over \$250,000. Nonetheless Yannotti could not attend. He's in jail awaiting sentencing in an unrelated racketeering case.

NY PRESS STAFF HEADS FOR THE DOOR

Citing the paper's refusal to reprint the cartoons that have offended Muslims across the globe, the editorial staff of the *New York Press* walked off the job. Three of the paper's top editors and the city beat reporter also resigned.

No stranger to staff upheavals and firings, the *New York Press* canned columnist Matt Tiabbi in 2005 for writing the hilarious article "52 Funniest Things About the Upcoming Death of the Pope."

In an email written on behalf of the editorial staff, editor-in-chief Harry Siegel said, "We have no illusions about the power of the *Press* (NY *Press*, we mean), but even on the far margins of the world-historical stage, we are not willing to side with the enemies of the values we hold dear, a free press not least among them."



'World Can't Wait' Takes It Right to Bush

BY JED BRANDT

Picking up their campaign to "drive out the Bush regime," World Can't Wait has been on a tear. Simultaneous rallies were held in 68 cities to "drown out" Bush's state of the union speech, with over 1,000 rallying in Times Square. Speakers included religious leaders, returned Iraq Veterans Against the War; Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party and Rhadames Rivera of SEIU 1199 Union.

"We need to create an environment where Bush is forced to step down, and where Cheney's cardiologist tells him he better not take the job," said Aimara Lin, organizer for the antiwar Not In Our Name project. "We've taken a beating over the last few years. The left, needs to come to terms with just how far Bush will take this. It's not just about one person stepping down, we're building an overall resistance throughout society."

The call to drive Bush received additional signatories from the Black

Congressional Caucus, including Major Owens (D-NY), Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Bobby Rush (D-IL). Twenty members of Congress are now calling for impeachment hearings.

Thousands gathering in Washington D.C. the following Saturday despite a torrential downpour.

Beyond the rallies, activists disrupted several events by ranking Republicans. Donald Rumsfeld was told to resign by one activist during a Pentagon briefing, and

From left: Bush's brain; February 4 rally in front of the White House; Antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan is led away from the Capitol gallery just before Bush took the podium; Crowds in Times Square call Bush's State of the Union a "State of Emergency."

PHOTOS: Stanley Rogouski (unless noted)

Travis Morales challenged a former director of the National Security Agency to a public debate over the wire-tapping scandal that may provide the first solid, impeachable offense for the president.

For more information: worldcantwait.net

Nation briefs

UAW MEMBERS "SCARE" TOYOTA

Dissidents in the United Auto Workers are causing a stir in their union and in the automotive industry. According to *The New Standard*, Toyota is thinking twice about building a new engine plant in Michigan because of the militancy of the dissident faction, Soldiers of Solidarity. The group "absolutely scares the liver out of Toyota," said David Cole, director of the pro-industry Center for Auto Research. The dissidents oppose proposed concessions with GM and the impending bankruptcy of Delphi.

ALMOST 10 PERCENT OF HOUSE DEMS BACK CENSURE OF BUSH & CHENEY

Twenty house Democrats are backing various resolutions that call for a probe, censure and impeachment of President George Bush. U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) spearheads the movement within the party and two bills call for censuring Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney for misleading the nation in going to war in Iraq.

OBITUARIES

Many progressive notables, from hammy "Grandpa" Al Lewis to intellectual Betty Friedan, died in the last couple weeks. Actor, activist and radio personality Al Lewis died at age 82. Best known for his role as Grandpa on the 60's TV show, "The Munsters," Lewis (born Alexander Meister) also had a radio program for years at WBAI.

Feminist theorist Betty Friedan died on Feb. 4 at the age of 85. Friedan wrote "The Feminine Mystique," and co-founded liberal groups National Organization for Women and National Abortion Rights Action League. Civil rights activist Coretta Scott King died on Jan. 31. Among other accomplishments she led the fight to make her martyred husband's birthday a national holiday. Playwright Wendy Wasserstein died on Jan. 30 at age 55. Wasserstein, whose works had feminist underpinnings, won the Pulitzer Prize with her play "The Heidi Chronicles."



BY MICHAEL SIMMONS

Read the simple blog entry by Stew Albert on Jan. 28. Two days later, he died of cancer at his home in Portland, Ore., surrounded by his wife, Judy Gumbo Albert, and their daughter, Jessica. He was 66.

Stew was an original member of the Yippies, who merged left-wing activism and freak culture in the late 1960s. Along with Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Paul Krassner and others, he was a soldier for justice as well as a subversive prankster; a practitioner of performance politics that blew the minds of young people by establishing a new tactic — *capture their imaginations and their hearts will follow*.

Stew, Jerry and Abbie first made news in August 1967 when they showered 500 one-dollar bills from the visitors' gallery of the New York Stock Exchange onto the floor below. For the first time in Wall Street's history, trading stopped while the greed-heads went grabby ga-ga for the green.

In October of that year, Stew helped

STEW ALBERT 1939-2006 Yippie! for Life

organize the March on the Pentagon to exorcise it of evil and try to levitate it. Again, the media lapped it up. Soon dubbed the Yippies — the Youth International Party — by Krassner, the gang began planning a Festival of Life to protest the Democratic Convention in August 1968. Stew contributed Pigasus, an actual pig that he and Jerry announced was the Yippie candidate for president. The counter-convention devolved when thousands of demonstrators, including Stew, were savagely beaten in what was dubbed "a police riot" by a federal commission. The government prosecuted several of the organizers for conspiracy to riot, in the legendary "Chicago Seven" trial. Stew was named an unindicted co-conspirator.

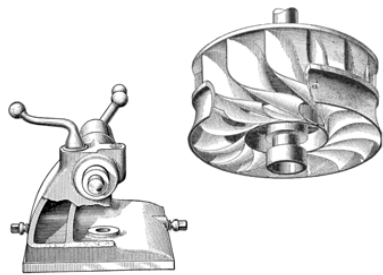
Stew later flew to Algeria to help fugitive Timothy Leary, who sought refuge there, along with another exile, Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver. (Of all the Yippies, Stew was the closest to the Panthers.) He enlisted John Lennon and Yoko Ono in a "Beatle/Yippie pact" that resulted in Lennon's near-deportation. He ran for sheriff of Alameda County,

California, where he'd earlier done months of jail time. He traveled to Chile with folksinger Phil Ochs before the 1973 CIA-backed coup against the elected socialist government there. Stew helped create People's Park in Berkeley in 1969. Then-Governor Ronald Reagan responded to the DIY green space by bringing in the National Guard and turning the streets into a war zone. After Stew and Judy discovered a tracking device under their car, they sued the FBI for illegal surveillance — and won (proving why the feds should have to get judicial warrants).

Stew was played by actor Donal Logue in the Abbie Hoffman biopic *Steal This Movie* in 2000. Through the years, he mentored young activists from all over the world who corresponded with him, asking about Yippies and seeking advice on contemporary shit-stirring. He published *The Sixties Papers* with Judy and his autobiography, *Who The Hell Is Stew Albert?*

As he wrote in the latter, he had "an uncontrollable need to test my bravery," something he did until the end.

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Seniors Slam Medicare Coverage

BY RUTH KELTON

They lost me!" wailed Sherawn. In early January she was seated in a small clinic on the Lower East Side. "When I went to get my meds at the store, the pharmacist couldn't find me on the computer."

Sherawn, a Medicare/Medicaid "dual-eligible" patient, was one of thousands of seniors who, since Jan. 1, have had trouble getting prescriptions filled using their new Part D Medicare Prescription Drug coverage. Other seniors have had similar problems.

Victor, sitting in the crowded anteroom of a Manhattan diagnostic lab, groused, "I couldn't get my medications. They said the insurance company Medicaid assigned me to didn't cover them."

And Gillian, a Medicare patient at the Lower East Side clinic, said she hadn't even signed up for Part D yet and so had no drug coverage. "Too confusing! The rules are too complicated and there are just too many insurance plans."

Seniors calling the Medicare helpline are likely to have a long wait for an answer. (A recent caller was faced first with a nearly impenetrable menu of choices, followed by nearly half an hour on hold before reaching an operator.)

Pharmacists complain that reaching the private insurers handling Part D is impossible: "They just don't answer," says one professional trying to help a customer.

Part D, ostensibly set up to make both generic and patented prescription drugs cheaply and easily available to the old and the poor, seems to have morphed into a monster designed to frustrate and confuse many of the people it was supposed to help:



those trying to enroll, advocacy groups have begun "an immediate, if piecemeal, effort to remedy the problems facing seniors," says Deane Beebe, communications director of the Medicare Rights Center in New York City.

Barbara Cebuha, a spokesperson for the Centers for Medicare Services (CMS), the government's Medicare coordination arm, estimates about 10,000 people may have been adversely affected. CMS has increased its staff of caseworkers to 4,500 to handle the increased volume of queries, and according to Cebuha, "millions of prescriptions have been filled."

Her outlook may be a little too sunny. Many advocacy groups estimate that the number of seniors snarled in Part D problems runs to the tens of thousands.

For immediate help at the cash register, about half of the states have stepped in with state funds to cover seniors' costs.

A group of Democratic senators has introduced a bill mandating federal reimbursement to the states for their fielding of federal responsibilities. And CMS has outlined a program for state reimbursement.

The source of all these problems lies, of course, in the present administration's privatization of public services. The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, the foundation of Part D, was essentially a direct handout to private industry.

John Steinberg, a spokesman for Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), one of the act's strongest opponents, says: "The bill was designed by and for the special interests. The drug industry and HMO lobbyists helped write it to protect their interests, while seniors' interests were not protected."

- A recent AP-Ipsos poll found that two-thirds of the seniors surveyed thought the plan was hard to understand.

- In New York State alone, a partial list of insurers from which Medicare and dual-eligibles must choose to get Part D includes 150 insurer-administered Health Management Organizations (HMOs) and private Prescription Drug Plans.

- Each of the thousands of such plans available across the country offers a different list of drugs it will cover.

To help beleaguered Part D participants and

Mountain People Suffering

BY ANTRIM CASKEY

MINGO COUNTY, WV—Southern West Virginia is dying. Its mountains are collapsing into themselves. They’ve been mined underground, empty caverns are filled with coal sludge, and had their tops blown off and swept into the valleys below to extract the upper seams of coal.

Below, the mountain people are being forced from their homes. Their drinking water smells like sulfur and is laden with toxic chemicals; bathing, cooking and drinking with this well water is to be avoided whenever possible. Their land and homes are being washed away in floods due to irresponsible mining. Schools are closing. Cancers and kidney, liver and respiratory problems have ravaged the communities that sit below the mountains being mined.

Statewide, sixteen mine workers have been killed so far this year. Gov. Joe Manchin III spoke to the press after three mining accidents in the state on Feb. 1 resulted in two deaths and one injury. He called for a statewide “safety stand down.” Production was to be halted and safety inspections would start immediately, Manchin promised. “We’re not going to produce another lump of coal – we are going to correct the safety conditions,” he said. To many, the “safety stand down” rings hollow; promises have been made before.

West Virginia produces 150 million tons of coal a year, second only to Wyoming, according to the West Virginia Coal Association (WVCA). Seventy percent comes from underground mining, while the rest comes from surface mining, which includes strip-mining, long-wall mining and mountaintop removal. One-third of West Virginia’s coal is shipped to 28 different countries around the world, according to Bill Raney, president of the WVCA, a powerful industry lobby.

The human costs of coal production are profound. The waste from coal mining and processing has poisoned the air and the ground water. I saw many people who had sores on their bodies from bathing in the poisoned water; those who

can afford to buy all their drinking and cooking water, but most cannot. I felt like I was in a developing country brushing my teeth with bottled water.

Have you ever turned on your tap and had the water come out black? I witnessed this several times in the last two weeks. Water from every tap in Kenneth Stroud’s home in Mingo County came out rust colored, laced with a gritty oily substance some alleged to be diesel fuel.

When the coal company has been pumping toxic sludge into your mountains for 30 years, this is what can happen.

The coal industry, which employs more than 40,000 West Virginians, is embedded within the state’s governing bodies and regulatory agencies. Government from county to state is mired in corruption and graft, I was told again and again during my latest two-week visit to the mountain state. Residents say the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the federal EPA are a joke.

They complain that public hearings for mining permits are for show. The permit hearing is a routine where “a button on a recording device is pressed and a ‘thank you very much, we’ll take your words [of protest] back with us’ is the panel’s standard response.

Citizens from Boone, Raleigh and Mingo Counties told me how they go to these hearings and pour their hearts out, asking for help, for the law to be enforced. They tell state officials how the air they breathe, the water they drink and the land they live on is making them sick and killing many, but to no avail. State police are often present at the more controversial hearings, like those for expansion of the mine behind Marsh Fork Elementary in Sundial, Raleigh County.

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush called for Americans to end their dependence on oil, pointing to coal to pick up some of the slack. The BBC reported that in order to do this, West Virginia will have to increase its current coal production by 50 percent.

What will this do to southern West Virginia? How can she



KENNETH STROUD runs the water in his Mingo County, WV home. PHOTO BY ANTRIM CASKEY

endure more? I felt a visceral tension in the air, conflict is palpable. The mountain people, the ones whose families have lived here for seven, eight, even nine generations, are suffering badly. They are being sacrificed for the coal industry and our nation’s seemingly insatiable appetite for power.

I spent two weeks talking to people in the towns of Sylvester, Bob White, Rawl and Rock Creek. I heard so many stories, of sickness and death, and wholesale destruction of communities. I left West Virginia with tears of sadness and rage for the crimes being committed against the mountain people.

War at Home

The Anti-Sheehan: Who is Dan Clay?

BY KAT AARON

In his State of the Union address on Jan. 31, President Bush made the case for continuing the war in Iraq. He argued that “we must keep our word, defeat our enemies and stand behind the American military in its vital mission.”

President Bush then invoked the name of Dan Clay.

“Marine Staff Sgt. Dan Clay was killed last month fighting the enemy in Falluja,” Bush said. “He left behind a letter to his family, but his words could just as well be addressed to every American. Here is what Dan wrote: ‘I know what honor is. It has been an honor to protect and serve all of you. I faced death with the secure knowledge that you would not have to... Never falter! Don’t hesitate to honor and support those of us who have the honor of protecting that which is worth protecting.’”

A shot of Dan Clay’s family sitting in the audience then flashed across the screen. Next, Dan’s picture came up alongside a profile of Bush, smiling in uniform.

Dan Clay and his family present a stark contrast to Cindy Sheehan, whose son, Casey Sheehan, was killed in Iraq in April 2004. Sheehan famously sought a meeting with President Bush, camping outside his ranch in Crawford, Texas, and protesting at the White House. Bud Clay is Dan Clay’s father, and his response to the death of his son was quite different from Sheehan’s. After his son was killed, Bud Clay wrote a letter to President Bush, which reads in part:

“Dan was a Christian – he knew Jesus as

Lord and Savior – so we know where he is. In his final letter (one left with me for the family – to be read in case of his death) he says ‘if you are reading this, it means my race is over.’ He’s home now – his and our real home. I am writing to you – to tell you how proud and thankful we (his parents and family) are of you and what you are trying to do to protect us all.”

Dan Clay’s last letter is the one Bush quoted. Dan starts off by writing, “This letter being read means that I have been deemed worthy of being with Christ... This is not a bad thing. It is what we hope for. The secret is out. He lives and His promises are real! It is not faith that supports this... but fact and I now am a part of the promise. Here is notice! Wake up! All that we hope for is Real. Not a hope. But Real.”

The letters from Dan and Bud Clay are a far cry from Cindy Sheehan’s now-famous open letter to Bush, which includes these lines: “We are going to do everything in our power to have you impeached for misleading the American people into a disastrous war and for mis-using and abusing your power as Commander-in-Chief. We are going to scream until our last breath to bring the rest of our babies home from this quagmire of a war that you have gotten our country into.”

As it happens, Sheehan also attended the State of the Union, as a guest of Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.). Only Sheehan was arrested before the start of the address for wearing a T-shirt that read “2245 Dead. How many more?”

The Clays’ letters are on a website (forums.techguy.org) under a discussion

titled, “Are there any evangelical Christians out there?” They were reposted at marinecorpsmom.com by “Deb,” one of the editors at the site, who appears to be Deb Conrad of Lebanon, Ore., mother of Lance Cpl. Shane Conrad. In her post on the Clay letters, Deb wrote “I would love to see this father, who understands the true meaning of honor and who continues to support his son, given the same media attention given to Cindy Sheehan.”

Her wish has been granted. But what does it mean that the one soldier Bush chooses to highlight – one of the 2,254 U.S. soldiers killed in the war in Iraq – apparently had strong ties to the evangelical community, and was fighting for his god at least as much as his country? In promoting Dan Clay and his family to the nation and the world, Bush has reinforced the dangerous perception that the war on Iraq is a war between Christianity and Islam.

The idea that Bush is sending covert messages to his fundamentalist base is nothing new – historian Bruce Lincoln argues that there have been coded Christian references in Bush’s speeches for years, including subtle references to a holy war. And some not-so-subtle references – on September 16, 2001, Bush said America was embarking upon a “crusade” against terrorism.

Dan Clay was chosen carefully for mention in the State of the Union, and his religious ties and beliefs are no secret. Bush has sent a message not just to Christians in America but to Muslims as well – the soldiers he celebrates are the holy warriors.



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The Politics of Listening

BY JOHN GIBLER

CAMPECHE, Mexico – Under the slow-turning ceiling fans of a converted carport behind a pastry shop, 66-year old Emiliano Centurron picked up a microphone for the first time. He stood between a crowd of 200 people packed under the shade, fanning themselves with pamphlets and newspapers, and Subcomandante Marcos, who sat facing the crowd, hunched over a notebook crammed with writing. Dozens of photographers clumped at the edges of the crowd and down the center aisle. Centurron held the microphone a few inches from his face and, in steady language colored with well-placed expletives, told the story of how the beekeepers’ cooperative he co-founded was seized by the state government.

“I have always preferred to live by my own work, not on the backs of others” Centurron said. “Those who live in the governor’s mansion live on the earnings of the people. For me those sons-of-bitches are not governmental authorities, if they were authorities of any kind they wouldn’t insist on giving me \$300, they would pay me back my investments.”

This is the Other Campaign, a place where Mexicans who have never held a microphone in their hands can voice their complaints and concerns, their stories of resistance, their thoughts and feelings about their communities and their country. Seven days a week Subcomandante Marcos, the EZLN’s Delegate Zero for the Other Campaign, con-

venes this space by listening for hours to any and all who sign-up, raise their hands, or stand up and shout from the crowd.

Some, like Centurron, unfold stories of a lifetime of work eviscerated by corruption. Some decry the general direction of Mexican politics: privatization, concentration of landownership, foreign intervention, impunity, kleptocracy. Some want to express their appreciation for the visit, or their support for the Other Campaign. Some just want to get up close to Marcos and don’t really say much at all. And, of course, some only want to hear their own voices through the powerful, though inevitably faulty, sound system.

Attendance at Other Campaign meetings is broad and diverse. The university educated, non-profit professionals so common in left political meetings in the United States make up a tiny fraction of the audience and participants here. Most are working class men and women, old and young, indigenous and mestizo. One reason for this is that the Other Campaign spends most of its time going to the small rural villages and the abandoned neighborhoods on the periphery of large cities where the working class lives.

For hours in the stifling heat, people take up the microphone to speak. No one polices for content or time. The meetings go for as long as people keep lining up to talk. And the listening is strenuous, at times exhausting: the length of the meetings, the relentless seven-days a week, two-to-three-meetings a



SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS, now Delegate Zero, is taking the Zapatista message outside Chiapas. PHOTO: chiapas.indymedia.org

day pace, the heat, and the inevitable droning of attention seekers. But mostly, the intensity of so many of the interventions requires a fierce level of concentration. Truly listening, as the Other Campaign proposes, is a mental marathon unlike anything I have ever known.

The majority of those who come to the meetings stick it out and, from what I can tell by watching, truly listen.

But what good will all this listening do? For the immediate problems facing those who attend the several hour stops of the Other Campaign, the meetings themselves do not offer solutions, as Marcos constantly reiterates during his closing speeches. The listening is only the beginning, a first step towards national organizing.

In the short term, though, the EZLN hopes that the Other Campaign meetings will catalyze the creation of broader networks of resistance at the local level. Just in the past

month, the campaign has succeeded in uniting various cities and rural villages where inhabitants refuse to pay their exorbitant electricity bills and bringing together Mayan communities threatened with displacement for the construction of resorts and airports in Quintana Roo, Yucatan, and Campeche.

In this respect, the hardest work of the Other Campaign begins when the Delegate Zero, the caravan, and the press all depart. Then, without the energy jolt of a masked rebel and the swarms of television cameras that follow him, the disenfranchised indigenous, working poor, students and professional, non-profit class have to put aside old turf battles and surmount the hostility of local officials to build up the new alliances and put them to work.

John Gibler is a human rights fellow in Mexico for Global Exchange. A longer version of this article appeared on Zmag.org.

“The disease wasn’t a reality for me then ... how things have changed.”

Memory books are collections of stories from HIV-positive parents who want to pass on their memory and experiences to the friends and children. The stories are usually cautionary tales, mostly by women, to teach those who are left behind not to make the same mistakes as those afflicted with the virus. However, the stories that make up memory books are often very touching and seek to leave behind something other than an obituary. The first memory book project was produced in 1991 by dying immigrant African parents in London for their children. Since the onset of the AIDS epidemic, life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa has lowered dramatically and more than 15 million Africans have died from the virus. In 2005 alone, an estimated 2.4 million died from AIDS in countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the previous year, an estimated 25.4 million of the 39.4 million HIV-positive people in the world lived in sub-Saharan Africa. Below is a selection of stories compiled from avert.org, a British AIDS prevention organization that has multiple projects throughout Africa.

letter from RITA

I have read stories from other HIV-positive people and I think I should share mine with you too.

I am a married woman aged 39 years with four children. I am a South African living in South Africa.

I discovered that I am HIV-positive in November 2000 when I wanted to insure my house. In April that year, my husband was hospitalized and discharged without my knowledge as he was working away from home. I came to know when I phoned him. When he was discharged he came home for two to three weeks. For the rest of his stay at home we did not have sex, which was strange, and he looked worried.

Towards the end of June the same year my one-year-old daughter who I was breastfeeding was admitted in hospital and it was pneumonia which I did not think much about its connection with her father’s illness.

In October when we had to undergo the HIV test I was confident but my husband was

nervous although he pretended to be fine.

One day when I got home I was got a message from the Doctor that we should both of us I myself and my husband) see him. It was Friday afternoon. What came right to my mind was that I was going to get the bad news. I only started to think back, my husband got sick and my daughter too.

As usual my husband ignored the importance of meeting the doctor and went back to his workplace. On Monday I called the doctor and confirmed an appointment. I had to go there alone and I was told that I was HIV positive. I can’t explain the situation I went through, you know I nearly collapsed, I went straight home to sleep. I only told my children that I was not feeling well. I did not have courage to tell them my status because I am only their last hope in life.

I took three days crying, without eating, until I felt that I was weak and could not do anything. That was when I remembered that I had someone special to talk to which was GOD. I prayed, I read the Bible from

time to time crying accusing God of what has happened to me. You know from the readings I got courage, I told myself that at least for the remaining years I could work hard for my children.

On my own I think I am tough, I can handle the situation. But what eats me every day of my life is looking at my little girl who is also suffering. She will be four in July this year. I always blame myself for breast feeding. I thought I loved her, look at what has happened, she is also HIV-positive. I wish I could confess to her but she is too young to understand.

The reason I regret breastfeeding my daughter is that in February the same year, I had to be operated and I tested negative. The other thing I suspect is that my husband did this purposely, maybe he was told when he was in hospital, that is why when he got home we did not have any sex. But when next he came home we continued with unprotected sex.

The people who know about my status are my two sisters who are supportive indeed.

I wish all the best for everyone.

letter from MAMELLO

I’m 20 years old and from South Africa. I remember when I was 14 and I wrote a poem called “silent killer,” which was about AIDS. The disease wasn’t a reality for me then ... how things have changed.

I took my first test today. The results came back negative, and although I’m happy and all, it really made me think. I find myself in a country where it’s not a matter of default that someone my age is negative. So many of

**To everyone who is -ve,
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Africa is to be re-awakened,
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the people I grew up with are becoming sick and dying. In South Africa, funerals used to be held on Saturdays only. These days, it’s a Monday to Monday affair.

What really hits hard is the number of young people who seem to have the attitude that “it won’t happen to me.” Girls as young as 14 are falling pregnant – which obviously means that they are exposing themselves to monumental risk. And its even sadder is that so much time and money is being spent on education and prevention, and its hard to see the positive effects.

Africa is dying slowly.

To all those who are positive, please stay strong. Joshua 1:9 says “be strong and of good courage, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Even if all else fails, He will never, ever stop loving you.

To everyone who is negative, please stay that way. If Africa is to be re-awakened, then hope needs to be restored. Here’s to a re-awakening of hope.

Iran Gets The Iraq Treatment

BY A.K. GUPTA

It's no coincidence that the dispute over Iran's nuclear program sounds familiar. The Bush administration is once again using deceit to threaten military action against a country allegedly trying to acquire nuclear weapons. And playing along once again is the New York Times, which is publishing flimsy evidence as fact.

The U.S. claims—include a stolen laptop, a nefarious-sounding “Green Salt” project and traces of highly enriched uranium—have proven baseless so far.

As in the spurious link between al Qaeda and Iraq, perception matters more than facts. And the perception is that Iran is hiding a weapons program, which is being used to justify a military strike. According to a recent Zogby poll, 47 percent of Americans back a unilateral strike against Iran.

The Bush administration is stoking the war mood by declaring, “all options are on the table.” But its military options are few. Iran has two trump cards--its ability to disrupt oil supplies in the Persian Gulf and stoke attacks against U.S. forces bogged down in Iraq.

At the center of the crisis is the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Western powers, according to a Feb. 3 Times report, are pressuring “Iran to give up two rights guaranteed under the [NPT]: its right to enrich uranium to produce electric power, and its right to withdraw from the treaty if its security is threatened.”

The Times report concludes, “the international community is essentially reinterpreting the treaty by holding Iran to a higher standard.” The double standard includes the nuclear powers’ refusal to disarm, as required under the NPT.

The crisis intensified on Jan. 7 when Iran announced that it was suspending “all the voluntary measures and extra cooperation with” the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This culminated in a 27-3

vote by the IAEA board on Feb. 4 to send the case to the U.N. Security Council.

It will defer the issue until March 6 when IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei submits a report. Following the IAEA decision, Iran announced that it would proceed with uranium enrichment, while adding, “all the country’s peaceful activities will remain within the framework of the Nonproliferation Treaty.”

So if Iran suspended only “voluntary” agreements and is adhering to the NPT, then what’s the crisis? Even the IAEA admits that its agreements with Iran, which included snap inspections, are “non legally binding.”

Recently, I spoke to an Iranian-American physician who just returned from Tehran. He says that the real issue is the fuel cycle, not a bomb. Namely, Western countries (not just the U.S.) want to control the uranium-enrichment process. With oil prices rising and the globe warming, nuclear power is poised to become an increasingly sought-after energy source. Thus, he argues, the West wants to control as many energy sources as possible.

The New York Times admits as much. Iran reached an agreement with England, France and Germany to voluntarily shut down a uranium-enrichment plant at Natanz in November 2004. It hoped to gain improved economic and political ties in return. “Tired of waiting for the rewards,” the Times reported on Feb. 3, Iran reopened the Natanz plant in January.

The Iranians were convinced that the Europeans “were determined to permanently deprive Iran of its right to develop a fuel cycle for peaceful purposes.”

Processing uranium for electricity generation (which requires enriching the uranium 235 isotope from its natural state of .7 percent to 3 to 5 percent) is one step towards weapons-grade uranium (around 90 percent U235).

The Washington Post reported last Aug. 23, however, “No Proof Found of Iran Arms Program.” It noted that Iran went so far as to



IRANIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad represents the clerical faction that wants to pursue a harder line with Western countries. Islamicists are reaping a broad discontent with European and American insistence on their right to set global terms.

offer “to put the entire program under IAEA monitoring.” Not wanting Iran to retain any bomb-making capacity, Europe and the United States rejected the proposal.

The IAEA for its part is now invoking the “prove a negative” burden placed on Iraq. It states, “after nearly three years of intensive verification activity, the Agency is not yet in a position... to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran.”

As for the traces of highly enriched uranium, the Post reported that a team of scientists from the big five Security Council nations “definitively matched” the uranium to contaminated centrifuge equipment purchased from Pakistan. One Bush administration official admitted “the biggest smoking gun... is now eliminated.”

Still, “all options are on the table.” Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte told the U.S. Senate on Feb. 2 that is because the danger is Iran “will acquire a nuclear weapon... and integrate it with ballistic missiles.”

Yet the most recent U.S. intelligence review estimated that Iran is “about a decade away from manufacturing the key ingredient for a nuclear weapon,” according to the Washington Post.

That hasn’t stopped the Bush administration from promoting, or the Times from reporting, what appear to be outright fabrications.

The day after Bush issued a thinly veiled call for regime change in Iran in the State of the Union, the Times reported on “a secretive Iranian entity called the Green Salt Project, which worked on uranium processing, high explosives and a missile warhead design.”

Some of this was cited in the IAEA report. The Times writes, “American officials say the [IAEA] allegations are based in part on material from a laptop computer seized in Iran.”

This is the infamous laptop that Times reporter David Sanger hyped as proof of a weapons program. The laptop supposedly came from one unnamed source that received it from another unnamed source, now dead. The warhead design documents have since been shown to be for a missile re-entry vehicle, which is fundamentally different.

An all-too-familiar pattern is emerging. Dodgy evidence provided by the Bush administration is being reported on as fact by the same paper that hyped the Iraq threat. Picked up by a U.N. body subject to U.S. pressure, the charges are provoking an international crisis. Coming full circle, the Bush administration, through the Security Council, will now judge evidence it may well have fabricated.

World briefs

MUSLIM RIOTS SPREAD IN RESPONSE TO DANISH ANTI-ISLAMIC CARTOONS

Protest and riots responding to a provocative series of cartoon depicting the Muslim prophet Mohamed as a terrorist spread throughout the world. Commissioned last September by the editor of the right-wing Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, the cartoon were specifically composed to affront observant Muslims. Islamic tradition does not depict Mohamed as part of their aversion to idolatry. Some images depicted Mohamed with a bomb for a turban, others equated Islam with animals. Denmark’s current government is particularly anti-immigrant, and Danish troops are part of the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A wide-spread boycott of Danish goods has swept the Islamic world. Iran and Libya have cut diplomatic ties with Denmark, and sectarian violence erupted in Beirut with rampaging mobs of religious fundamentalists damaging a Christian church.. Beirut has a large Christian population and is bitterly divided along sectarian lines.

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM HELD IN CARACAS

WSF Meets in Venezuela
More than 70,000 people attended the sixth annual World Social Forum (WSF) Jan. 24-29. Held this year in Caracas, Venezuela, the WSF is the largest annual international gathering of activists from the left and civil society.

According to the Anti-Imperialist Bloc, a participating group, the key issue debated by attendees was the relationship of social movements to the wave of center-left government that has swept recent South American elections. A much smaller alternative gathering held in conjunction with the WSF was sponsored by anti-authoritarian organizations hostile to Venezuela’s leftist government. The WSF is timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum, an annual gathering of the world’s economic, political and cultural elites held in Davos, Switzerland.

HAITIAN ELECTIONS MARRED BY CHAOS, STACKED BALLOT

Haiti’s first elections since a 2004 U.S.-sponsored military coup overthrew the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide were marred by chaos as throngs of voters from poor districts jammed polling stations Feb. 7. Voting sites were not set up in Cit’e Soleil, the massive slum in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince and a center of popular resistance to the coup.

Haiti is occupied by U.N. forces engaged in a low-intensity war with Aristide loyalists. According to a U.N. spokesperson, foreign troops will remain in Haiti “for the long haul.” Aristide is currently exiled in South Africa and barred from the ballot.

Rene Preval, who served as prime minister under Aristide before a prior 1991 military coup forced both men into exile, is favored to win, according to international press reports. Preval’s leading opponent is Charles Henri Baker, the candidate of Haiti’s light-skinned business elite.

Only 20 percent of Nepalis voted in the first elections since King Gyanendra assumed absolute power two years ago. The population largely heeded a boycott called by every electoral party, and threats by Maoist rebels. Royal armed forces opened fire on democracy protesters in the Southwest, and hundreds were arrested in Katmandu during a week-long strike called by the Maoists.

Lawyers representing **Guantanamo Bay** detainees report that more

than half of prisoners have not been accused of committing hostile acts against the U.S. or its allies.

Acting Israeli Prime Minister **Ehud Olmert** plans to annex the Jordan Valley and major Jewish settlements and unilaterally redraw Israel’s borders in violation of international law.

The **WTO** overturned European restrictions on imports of U.S.-produced genetically modified food in a hotly contested dispute.

RECYCLED PROPAGANDA		
It's no coincidence that the campaign against Iran bears a striking resemblance to the march to war against Iraq. Here a just a few of the similarities.		
	THEN	NOW
The New Hitler	Saddam Hussein	Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
Colorful Evidence	Yellowcake	Green Salt
Key Human Intel	“Curveball”	Mujahedin-e Khalq an Iranian dissident group deemed a terrorist organization by the State Dept.
‘Hard Evidence’	Forged documents provided by an Italian Intelligence Agency, but which may have originated in the U.S.	A laptop that came from an unnamed source who got it from another unnamed source who is now dead
Times Reporter who published dodgy evidence as fact	Judith Miller	David Sanger



The power of sex is harnessed to pleasure, bind, inspire, and bear fruit and multiply. Alternately, that same power is used to shame, punish and kill when marginalized as perverse, or used as a weapon. Evolutionary forces shaped our sexuality, our rituals and our culture, yet the sexual landscape we face today is an uncharted one. Technologies have combined with the decay of social space to foster digi-dating and sex through hot-and-bothered text messaging.

The influence of conservative Christianity along with the rise of raunch culture is creating 15-year-old fathers who never had a sex-ed class. Energized and organized queer culture has made a welcome dent in the sexual binary, yet their struggles for civil rights are demonized by the right to maintain its monopoly on power. Whatever the issue, talking about it is better than keeping it in. We are pleased to present our second annual Sex Issue.

Please send any comments to indygstring@yahoo.com or comment at nyc.indymedia.org

Getting on the Good Foot

BY SARAH PATTERSON
PHOTOS BY ERIN SIEGAL

A friend of mine told me about foot fetish parties where men paid her to let them worship at her feet. After trolling “Adult Gigs” on Craig’s List for a while, I found a dungeon in New York that was hosting a foot party and impulsively went to my first one about six months ago.

The mistress of the dungeon told me to dress sexy. I thought that meant sexy date outfit. She actually meant underwear. Despite the fact you are only selling your feet, maximum exposure of skin is the standard for a foot party. Youthful (teenage, even) appearance is almost always the look of choice – the clients pay for full access to something akin to a girl’s locker room or slumber party.

Men at foot parties can be divided into six overlapping categories: massagers, toe suckers, ticklers, tramplees, foot job guys and sissy boys/voyeurists. Fetishes invariably take on a different coloring when they are transformed into paid services. Everything looks a bit more bizarre under the bordello-red lighting of a dungeon, even a fetish as “tame” as foot worship. Some foot guys feel more comfortable paying to worship foot models than they do asking their significant other to fulfill their desires to, say, suck toes. This fact became most apparent to me when a client once told me not to trample on his chest too hard in my heels because “his wife would see it.” This made me feel like I was in a bad Lifetime movie, invariably playing the role of the hooker.

The massagers are the kind of guys who would



The author prepares for a foot party held in a in a New Jersey suburb.

eagerly offer you a backrub at a bar if you looked stiff. Many of these men are themselves the ones who believe their fetish is wrong or weird; they need these parties to accept their fetish as natural. They straddle the fence between acceptance and scorn, and they are willing to believe that at some

point they can gain social acceptance.

When a client admits to me that he wants a foot job (and often, it does come out as an admission), it is unsurprising. The secrecy seems an attempt to pretend that foot worship is somehow disconnected from getting off. The existence of foot jobs dispels the myth that, somehow, going to a foot party is different than calling an escort.

The “real money” is made by those workers who will go beyond foot work. In contrast to freelance fetish workers, our financial category is rigid: always \$20 for ten minutes, no matter what.

Some girls aren’t even in it for the money. At one recent party, three girlfriends from a college in Pennsylvania showed up wearing matching boy briefs with phrases like “Cheeky” etched on the back. For these girls, foot parties are the moral equivalent of “Girls Gone Wild”: a bit scandalous, but in the end, morally excusable.

Sometimes the atmosphere of house or hotel room parties is so casual that the girls forget they are working. One foot model I work with usually spends most of her night chatting with the same guys, does only a few sessions and leaves with under a hundred bucks.

The foot party environment seems to be based on the foot guys not wanting to be lumped in with other fetishists, though they inevitably are.

To them, slave boys, panty sniffers and wusses begging for a spanking are the perverts, but foot guys are “normal” men with “normal” sexual urges who, happen to fantasize about women’s feet.



@-string

Parental Advisory: Explicit History

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

I got nipples on my titties big as the end of my thumb,” Lucille Bogan sang on “Shave ‘Em Dry” in 1935. “I got something between my legs to make a dead man come.” The Rolling Stones stole the “make a dead man come” line for “Start Me Up” – and it was either skipped over or bleeped out when they played the song at the Super Bowl.

Bogan’s barrelhouse-piano blues was one of the most explicit tunes of an era of music filled with blatant sexual metaphors. “I want some sugar in my bowl/I want a hot dog on my roll,” beseeched the legendary Bessie Smith. Not all this was heterosexual either: Ma Rainey recorded the sapphic “Prove It on Me Blues” in 1928.

Country singer Jimmie Davis, who wrote “You Are My Sunshine,” started out by waxing the likes of “High Behind Blues” and “Red Nightgown Blues.” Despite his professed lust for dark-skinned women, Davis later became a segregationist governor of Louisiana. Thomas Dorsey, Ma Rainey’s pianist, penned the double-entendre hit “It’s Tight Like That” with Tampa Red in 1928 – before he got religion and wrote the gospel classics “Peace in the Valley” and “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.”

This music existed mainly in the rural South, urban ghettos, and red-light districts, but like a cultural hard-on pushing against the cloth of puritanism and segregation, double-entendre R&B oozed into the mainstream with the rise of rock’n’roll in the early ‘50s, with songs like Billy Ward and the Dominoes’ “Sixty Minute Man.” In 1954, Hank Ballard and the Midnighters’ “Work With Me Annie” (“Annie please don’t cheat/Give me all of my meat”) had to be

reworked twice before white radio stations would play it – rewritten as “Dance With Me Henry” and rerecorded by a white woman. (Ballard’s followup was called “Annie Had a Baby.”) Little Richard’s first hit, “Tutti Frutti,” was originally a ditty about “good booty” with lyrics like “if it don’t fit, don’t force it/you can grease it, make it easy.”

Punk Mockery and Dancehall Slackness

By the ‘70s, anything but blatant explicitness (like Lou Reed’s reference to “giving head”) was permissible on the radio, and white rockers’ adaptations of blues machismo, with I.I.-entendre lyrics like “I’m gonna give you every inch of my love,” constituted a style yclept “cock-rock.” As punk rejected the pomposities of corporate rock, it made it cool to be sexually dysfunctional, in tunes like Elvis Costello’s “Mystery Dance” and Alternative TV’s “Love Lies Limp.” Transgender punk-rocker Wayne County (now Jayne County) challenged straight men with the Max’s Kansas City jukebox hit “If You Don’t Want to Fuck Me, Baby, Fuck Off” – one of my favorite song titles of all time. And a British band called the Anti-Nowhere League got the best of both worlds in “So What,” with the lead singer blustering a succession of over-the-top macho boasts (“Well, I fucked a sheep/And I fucked a goat/I stuffed my cock right down its throat”) while the band chorused back “So what? So what?”

Meanwhile in Jamaica, dancehall audiences bored with Rastafarian preaching were reviving the venerable Caribbean tradition of “slackness,” turning to MCs like Yellowman and General Echo. Echo’s songs included “It’s My Desire to Set Your Crotches on Fire,” “Bathroom Sex,” and “Lorna She Love Young Boy

Banana” – the last about an old woman who “told me that she love a young boy banana, especially if he smoke marijuana.” Admiral Bailey begged for “Punanny.” MCs like Lady Saw (“Life Without Dick”) carry on the tradition.

By the mid-‘80s, American musicians could put pretty much anything on a record – as long as it had a “parental advisory” label, the result of a censorship campaign by the Christian right and several politicians’ wives (most notoriously erstwhile Deadhead Tipper Gore). Top pop artists like Prince (“Darling Nikki”) and Cyndi Lauper (“She Bop”) recorded obnoxious odes to female masturbation, and obscenity prosecutions of leftist punk-rocker Jello Biafra and porn-rappers 2 Live Crew failed. The gangsta rappers of the ‘90s pushed things into territory as humorless as hardcore porn, with a cold-blooded “bitches on my dick, 24-7” machismo, and sold millions of CDs with no radio play. Female MCs like Lil’ Kim and Khia countered with demands for their cunnilingual rights. “My neck, my back, lick my pussy and my crack...”

All this is as American as apple pie. A popular tune in the early days of the republic was a British upper-class drinking song called “To Anacreon in Heaven.” Named for an ancient Greek erotic poet, its chorus climaxed with instructions to “entwine the myrtle of Venus with Bacchus’s vine.” Maybe I have a dirty mind, but that sounds like a mythological allusion to pubic hair and wine.

Very few Americans know that song now, but you all know the melody. In 1814, Francis Scott Key rewrote it – and changed “myrtle of Venus” to “land of the free.”

Red-Light Districts of the Mind

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

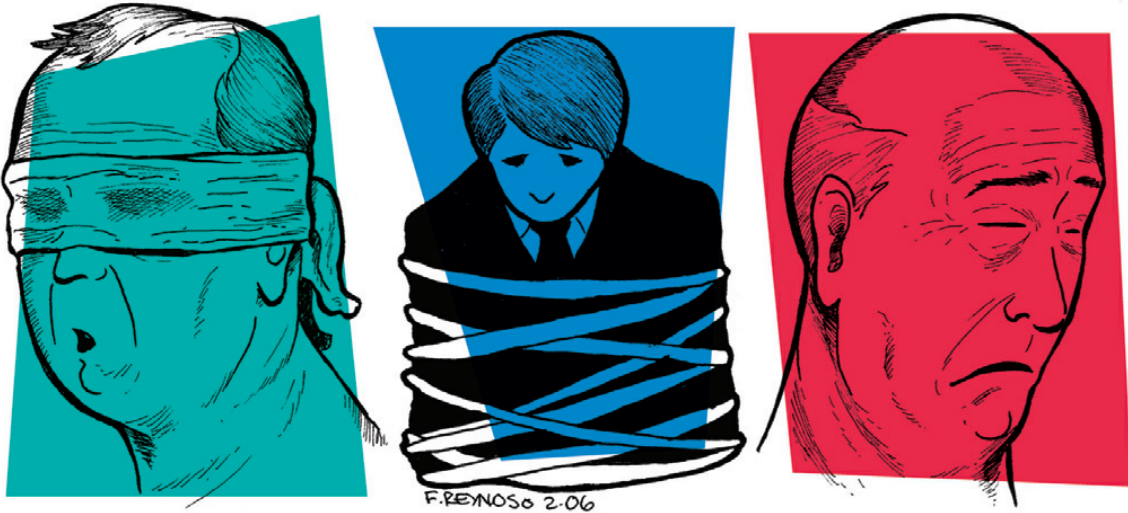
The new question in politics is not what do voters want but how they want it. Every election Republicans and Democrats poll and call to discover the unsatisfied values that elevates a specific issue to a universal cause. Do you believe people should be free of undo burdens? Tax cuts become tax relief. Do you believe in deciding for yourself? Pro-abortion becomes pro-choice. The term for this is “framing.”

The point of framing is to mobilize undecided voters by linking the choice to a deeper desire for innocence. One can vote with a clear conscience because as a metaphor the issue is described by comparing it with another. An example is taxes are not about social services but government theft of your wages. Since taxes are supposed to redistribute wealth from rich to poor, to say government steals wages is to say the poor who vote use the state to mug honest workers.

In Freudian theory this is how the unconscious works. Repressed desires are disguised and slip into reality. If “framing” manufactures the metaphors of innocence needed to bypass political censorship what is the desire it distorts? Beneath their frames is the unseen unconscious of each party. A few clues can be found in overheard humor, such as when President Bush said on CNN, “If this were a dictatorship, it would be a heck of a lot easier – just so long I’m the dictator.”

A closer inspection reveals repeated themes, undeclared goals and more importantly the basic structure of how political parties see the world. The following is a list of what history tells us are the fetish scenes that exist in their collective unconscious. It is a tour of red-light district of the mind.

The fundamental fantasy for Republicans is the figure of the Fallen Father who risked his life to create the



world we inherited. If we want to preserve it we must be faithful to his tradition and keep his legacy safe from foreigners. His law is eroticized and gives his descendants the pleasure of moral certainty as they clean society. A fetish scene would be washing the workers mouths out with soap if they ask for a raise but it would be soap made out of the bodies of workers who kept asking.

Democrats revolve around the figure of the Victim who is punished by a bankrupt law and they seek to free the sufferer from it. A fetish scene would be a liberal who found his lover tied with ropes and chains and unable to have sex. They untie the knots but can’t loosen one without tightening another. The feeling of guilt at failing to free their lover leads the liberal to tie them both together in an act of solidarity.

The Greens have the figure of the Raped Mother, of the earth as a maternal source of life that is exploited for

profit. Sensual hedonism is fine but wasting material is a crime. So a fetish scene would be using the knots in trees as glory-holes.

The Libertarian figure of fantasy is the Blind Father. No authority is watching over us and in that sightlessness we perform our own freedom. A fetish scene would be telling a cop to close his eyes and hold up a long mirror so the libertarian can watch himself masturbate.

The figure for Communism is the Tyrant Father who inspires Oedipal Rage. He forces us to work for him and steals the wealth we create. Communists share with liberals a fetish for victims but instead of the solidarity of suffering want victims to wage a war. A fetish scene would for the white and formerly middle-class commies to wear black-face and lead the poor into protest pens.

The Hard Right

BY JOHN TARLETON

With the Republicans and their Christian Right allies dominating the media, all three branches of government and much of the interior of the country, it seems as if they can’t stop preaching about how much they cherish “family values” and “moral clarity.” Sometimes, however, their actions speak louder than their words.

Forgotten Vows

Tennessee State Senator Jeff Miller, sponsor of a constitutional amendment aimed at “solemnizing the relationship of one man and one woman,” was accused of cheating on his wife of 15 years when she filed for divorce on Feb. 25, 2005.

Oklahoma Minister Caught “Pastoring”

Rev. Lonnie Latham was arrested Jan. 3, 2006 in Oklahoma City for asking a plainclothes policeman to accompany him to his hotel room to receive oral sex. Latham told a local television station that he was in the area “pastoring” to police. Latham has spoken out against same-sex marriage and in support of a Southern Baptist Convention directive urging its 42,000 churches to befriend gays and lesbians to convince them they can become heterosexuals.

Spokane Mayor Recalled

Spokane Mayor

Jim West was swept out of office in a Dec. 6 recall election following revelations in a local newspaper that West had offered jobs and perks to young men he had met in a gay internet chat room. West had previously served as a Boy Scout leader, a deputy sheriff and a member of the Washington state legislature before being elected mayor in 2003. During his 23-year political career, West attempted to ban gay men and lesbians from schools and daycare centers, to fire gay state employees, to deny City Hall benefits to domestic partners and to stifle AIDS-prevention education.



West had previously served as a Boy Scout leader, a deputy sheriff and a member of the Washington state legislature before being elected mayor in 2003. During his 23-year political career, West attempted to ban gay men and lesbians from schools and daycare centers, to fire gay state employees, to deny City Hall benefits to domestic partners and to stifle AIDS-prevention education.

Protecting Women’s Health

In a scathing expose, the former wife of Dr. W. David Hager, a senior federal adviser on women’s health issues, alleged that her husband had repeatedly sodomized her without her consent between 1995 and their divorce in 2002.

“I probably wouldn’t have objected so much, or felt it was so abusive if he had just wanted normal [vaginal] sex all the time,” Linda Davis told *The Nation* (5/30/05). “But it was the painful, invasive, totally non-consensual nature of the [anal] sex that was so horrible.”

Hager, a darling of the Religious Right and an outspoken opponent of emergency contraceptives, abortion and premarital sex, was appointed by President Bush in 2002 to the Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs in the Food and Drug Administration. He stepped down from his position in June 2005.

That Mule Sure Was Purdy

Leading anti-abortion webmaster Neal Horsley runs a website that offers detailed information on doctors who provide abortions. In a May 5 interview on Fox News radio, Horsley boasted of having sex with animals as a young man. “When you grow up on a farm in Georgia, your first girlfriend is a mule...You experiment with anything that moves when you are growing up sexually... If it’s warm and it’s damp and it vibrates you might in fact have sex with it.” In a subsequent appearance on Fox, Horsley explained that his mule-man relations had been “consensual.”

Online: NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG

The Regents don't test for HIV

BY ERIN THOMPSON

Kenneth, a 15-year-old 8th grader at a public school in Sunset Park, Brooklyn received information on STDs from his school nurse, who gave him a pamphlet shortly after he had learned that his 8th-grade girlfriend was pregnant with his child.

"[There were] no health classes. If there was a class, I would have taken it," Kenneth told *The Independent*.

Kenneth started having sex when he was 12 years old. He knows that HIV/AIDS can "kill people" and has been tested. At least three girls are pregnant in his middle school, and it's only the beginning of the second semester.

Since 1987 New York City has mandated a K-12 yearly curriculum of six lessons pertaining to HIV/AIDS education. It also requires that students get one semester of health education, including sex-ed, in both middle school and high school. High schools are mandated to provide limited access to condoms in health resource rooms.

Kenneth's school is on the list of Schools Under Registration Review. It is overwhelmingly Hispanic, with many recent immigrants, and over 90 percent students qualify for free lunches. Children whose fam-



Sex Ed Suffers Under Standardization Regime



ilies are at or below 130 percent of the poverty level qualify.

Here, students graduate 8th grade without ever having been given sex-ed, or information about reproductive functions, safe sex, or basic health and hygiene.

"In our school, it's hard to find an aspirin you can dispense, let alone a condom," said Sang Park, who teaches language arts at Kenneth's school. "It's outrageous what's happening to students — what is allowed, dismissed, overlooked."

THE NEW CURRICULUM

On Dec. 1, 2005, World AIDS Day, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Department of Education (DOE) released the updated HIV/AIDS curriculum. Its meant to be a comprehensive and age-appropriate overhaul of the 20-year-old curriculum. Plans are to introduce it by the end of the school year.

According to Betty Rothbart, the director of health education and family living for the DOE, this curriculum, represents a "tremendous statement of commitment" by the DOE to educating students about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

While commending that some action has been taken, Joe Pressley, Executive Director of the New York AIDS Coalition (NYAC), claims that the material was developed without adequate input from advocates for HIV/AIDS awareness.

According to Pressley, the curriculum needs more discussion on methods of contraception, provides too little teacher training and implementation, only represents the LGBT community as vectors of disease, and lacks a method for verifying the implementation of the program. Condom demonstrations in the classroom are still banned and the overall emphasis is on abstinence.

Speaking at "Overhauling Sex-Ed: The New Curriculum for NYC Schools," a Feb. 1 New School forum, Pressley held that the curriculum should focus on teaching students how to use condoms. Any HIV/AIDS education "has to meet students where they are... AIDS is more than just a science project."

NO ACCOUNTABILITY

Whatever the new standards are, the DOE seems to lack a system of accountability to ensure that any mandates, new or old, are being followed.

In January 2004, the New York AIDS Coalition released a report stating that 63 percent of public schools violated the mandated six lessons per year of HIV/AIDS training.

In early 2005, Youth Organizers United, a youth-run advocacy group focused on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS education, completed a survey of 486 students attending five public high schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan. They found that one fourth of all students said they had not received any of the mandated HIV/AIDS training over the past year.

"Nobody even knows about it," said middle school teacher Seth Rader of the new curriculum. Rader teaches 7th and 8th graders at an East Harlem K-8 public school. The school is 99 percent Black and Hispanic, with 99 percent of students qualifying for free lunches.

"Our literacy coach was a [former] HIV educator," said Rader. Occasionally the teacher will "pop in for a few minutes," if for some reason the topic of HIV/AIDS is broached. "As far as I know, it's not part of her job description or role," said Rader. He gave his 7th grade students about 90 minutes of health education last year, but it was his own initiative.

Michele Sarrie, who teaches art in a South Bronx middle school, said that teachers have heard "not a word" from the school board on sex-ed or the new HIV/AIDS curriculum. "As far as I know, it doesn't exist," she said.

Sarrie's school is classified under registration review, with 80 to 90 percent of students scoring far below the national averages on tests. The school is 99 percent Black and Hispanic with 95 percent of students qualifying for free lunches.

There are no sex-ed or HIV/AIDS lessons taught at the school. There is no condom program, and according to the principal, it doesn't offer sex-ed classes, so much as a program on "hygiene."

Laurie Behrman received a masters in health education from Columbia University's Teachers College, has New York State teaching certifications in health and social studies with over five years experience of health education, and is fluent in Spanish. Despite all this, she hasn't been able to get a full-time job teaching health in New York City. Instead she has substituted for health teachers at several public schools.

"It's actually easier to get a job teaching health in the suburbs than in New York City," Behrman said. "To me, it seems strange that the kids who need the health education the most, are not getting it."

"New York City needs to hire health teachers," said Behrman. "Students deserve teachers who want to be teaching health and enjoy doing so, not just those teachers who are willing to teach health."

AN UNEQUAL SYSTEM

Students with the best chance of receiving any sex education and HIV/AIDS information attend more selective, affluent schools. At FDR and Brooklyn Tech, 52 percent of students had received all six HIV/AIDS lessons. At open enroll-

ment Fort Hamilton High School, only six percent said they had received four or more lessons and 58 percent hadn't received any lessons.

"We had a whole semester of sex-ed. We started by writing a five-page paper on HIV/AIDS, and we did a little mini-relationship unit, a long section on STDs, and HIV/AIDS in particular," said Hallie of her 10th grade health class at Hunter College High School, a select admissions high school. The school employs two health teachers. Hallie reported having attended assemblies discussing HIV/AIDS in the 7th and 9th grade, as well as a semester in 8th and 10th grade dealing specifically with health and sex-ed.

Kevin Tobar remembers having 7th and 8th grade health instruction at his middle school, William H. Carr J.H.S. 194, a school that is 70 percent white and Asian, with 16 percent of students qualifying for free lunches.

"We learned about anatomy, all that stuff. I think they touched upon sex. They didn't talk to us about contraceptives, gay people, anal sex. Nothing like that," Tobar said.

Tobar is now a 12th grader at H.S. 525 Townsend Harris High School, a selective admissions school that is over 80 percent white and Asian, with a student body that averages above 600 on both the verbal and math SAT. Tobar attended HIV/AIDS assemblies in his 9th grade, and took a 10th grade health class.

"We did get into condoms, and how to put condoms on," said Tobar. "There were no demonstrations. They showed slides of STDs, what they looked like."

According to a physical education teacher at Kenneth's school in Sunset Park, students in Phys-Ed were supposed to have an HIV unit, but didn't. In case the school district inquired, the principal put on paper that students were receiving health instruction. "We [the teachers] wouldn't sign off on it," the teacher said.

This year, teachers were supposed to address health issues in science class, instead of phys-ed. But it's not being taught there either. When asked what he learned in science class, Kenneth replied, "All we learn about is animals."

"Every year, we put teaching health education on the list of classes we would prefer to teach, but instead we are assigned to lunch duty. They don't have enough teachers here," the physical education teacher said.

Schools Under Registration Review have a strict curriculum of testing in order to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Under the act, a school's "Adequate Yearly Progress" is measured by standardized testing in English, language arts, mathematics and science.

Individual students must not only meet the state-defined level of proficiency each year, but the entire student body must also accrue progress by a certain percentage per year — to the purpose of all schools being 100 percent compliant with federal standards by 2014. Schools that don't meet yearly progress for two consecutive years are considered "Schools in Need of Improvement."

Schools Under Registration Review are designated as needing improvement by not having met the state requirements in English and math. Once designated, schools are put through a five-year restructuring plan. If adequate improvement is not made by year five, schools must either reopen as a charter school, replace all or most of the school staff, including the principal, contract the school management with a private company, or be taken over by the state.

"I think probably the biggest obstacle to sex-ed... is the competition with testing," said Rader, whose school was formerly under registration review. The school was taken off the list four years ago, but Rader says that there is constant pressure to perform well on tests.

"All the measurement of improvement is based on test scores. There's a big push for that," said Rader.

At Michele Sarrie's South Bronx school, the story is much the same. "They're too busy telling us how to teach the kids to take the English and math tests together... everything is about the tests."

CONDONING DISCRIMINATION

In the 2004 survey done by Youth Organizers United, schools with the largest number of sexually active students also had the least HIV/AIDS education. According to a 2001-2002 report on AIDS by the New York State Department of Health, 77 percent of the 796 new AIDS cases reported in the state were young people between the ages of 20 and 24. Of those, 85 percent were Black or Hispanic. Most of them must have been infected in their teens.

"It's deplorable that we overlook [HIV/AIDS education] and put it by the wayside for academic pursuits," said Sang Park. "For the people in charge to not seriously look at this matter is condoning the socio-economic discrimination. You're saying it's okay because it's this group of people."

The Scariest the Sex, The Sweeter the Chastity

BY AMY WOLF

The Christian right has public school teens in a purse string stranglehold. They, along with their Republican allies have been able to channel much needed health education money into pro-abstinence organizations.

Catholic Charities alone received \$2.5 million of the \$9.3 million given to New York state in 2004 for sexual education funding. As the underfunded No Child Left Behind Act forces schools to cut health programs in favor of testing-based curricula, students are often left with just abstinence only education.

Judith Levine of Sexuality Information and Education Council for the United States (SIECUS) argues that there is a natural tendency of abstinence educators to escalate their messages: "Like advertising, which must continually jack up its seduction just to stay visible as other advertising proliferates, abstinence education had to make sex scarier and scarier and, at the same time, chastity sweeter."

Here is a sampling of the organizations and the rhetoric that shapes our national education policy.

Concerned Women for America

"It's time for the message of sexual purity to be sounded in the United States once again. Concerned Women for America is calling upon all legislators, parents, and educators to promote abstinence throughout this nation."

Focus on the Family

"For most of the past several decades, liberal sex-education organizations such as Planned Parenthood and Sexuality Information and Education Council for the United States (SIECUS) have had a philo-

sophical monopoly in public school sex-education programs. With the implementation of Title V of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, these groups saw an end to their monopoly. Title V allocated \$250 million (\$50 million per year for five years) for states to teach abstinence until marriage. SIECUS and friends have not been happy about Title V."

Family Research Council

"The Family Research Council (FRC) champions marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue, and the wellspring of society. FRC shapes public debate and formulates public policy that values human life and upholds the institutions of marriage and the family."

"Teens are greatly influenced by the messages they receive about sex in school. Unfortunately, the majority of schools teach 'safe sex'—'comprehensive' or so-called 'abstinence plus' programs—believing that it's best for kids to have all the information they need about sexuality and to make their own decisions about sex. Abstinence is downplayed while sexual activity and condom use are encouraged in these curriculums, because it's assumed that children are eventually going to have sex."

Citizens for Excellence in Education

"Public school teens and even pre-teens face tremendous peer pressure to become sexually active. The schools teach, 'just be sure to use condoms and be on the pill.' Result: Christian children face a double standard, with heavy peer pressure, many succumb, with tragic pregnancies, babies, lives and careers ruined. Enormous family pain results, often causing divorce."

"Parents find they have far less control over their child's friends and

peers and the resulting influence on their child's attitude toward sin, homosexuality, the occult, sex and drugs in the public schools."

American Family Association

"Parents, we cannot afford to misjudge sin's potential. Training should begin early. Boys must be taught to care for their eyes and mind. Girls must understand how easily they can become the object of pursuit—and that by lowering their standards and raising their skirts, they only fuel the imagination and drive of the opposite sex."

The Alpha Center

The Alpha Center provides abstinence programs (including *Lady in Waiting* and *The Bride Wore White*) to churches and schools, pregnancy testing, post-abortion counseling, parenting classes, a speakers bureau, medical agency referrals, relationship counseling, a resource library, and sponsors events such as God, Mom & Me Teas, and the Memorial for the Unborn.

Abstinence Clearing House

"The Clearinghouse houses the only Sex, Love and Relationship Store in the country, where posters, books, jewelry, pencils and numerous other items are available for purchase."

Medical Institute (for Sexual Health)

"True abstinence includes avoiding genital contact until marriage. Some have proposed mutual masturbation and 'outer course' as healthy and safe alternatives for single people. These activities are not consistent with the abstinent lifestyle. Sexual activity, such as these, can not only result in both pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, but can also lead to sexual intercourse."

All quotations are taken from materials from their own organizational materials. Research courtesy of www.siecus.org.

prevention programs work," argues Julie Davids, Executive Director of Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMPS).

In December 2005, 34 organizations from 15 states sent a letter to Rob Janssen, the Director of the CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, requesting a meeting to discuss the PEMS program. According to organizational representatives, the program interferes with the actual prevention education by diverting attention to answering a time-consuming list of invasive questions, strains already overburdened entities, and may put people with HIV at risk for criminal prosecution by collecting information about HIV status and sexual or drug behavior over a period of time.

Representatives from CHAMPS are currently waiting to hear back from the CDC on this matter.



Abstinence Loves Ignorance

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Playing to its right wing Christian base, the Bush administration is emphasizing abstinence-only until marriage programs in sex education and encourages young people to take "virginity pledges." The federal government gives over \$140 million each year to abstinence-only programs even though their effectiveness is suspect. Furthermore, sociologists Peter Bearman and Hanah Brückner, found that young people who took a pledge were one-third less likely to use contraception after becoming sexually active than their peers who had not pledged. Below are some quotes from federally funded textbooks and workbooks.

From *Me, My World, My Future*

"The first player spins the cylinder, points the gun to his/her head, and pulls the trigger. He/she has only one in six chances of being killed. But if one continues to perform this act, the chamber with the bullet will ultimately fall into position under the hammer, and the game ends as one of the players dies. Relying on condoms is like playing Russian roulette."

"At the least, the chances of getting pregnant with a condom are 1 out of 6."

(When used consistently and correctly condoms are 98 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and up to 99 percent effective in preventing the transmission of HIV and other STDs.)

Sex Respect (student workbook)

One of the best ways to avoid AIDS is to "avoid homosexual behavior."

"Is it fair to make the baby die because of a bad decision his or her parents made?"

"THERE IS NO WAY TO HAVE PREMARITAL SEX WITHOUT HURTING SOMEONE."

"A specific blood test for Chlamydia can detect the presence of the disease."

(Chlamydia is a bacterial infection of the cervix or penis. It cannot be detected through a blood test.)

"Watch what you wear, if you don't aim to please, don't aim to tease."

FACTS (middle school teacher's guide)

"There is no such thing as 'safe' or 'safer' premarital sex."

Choosing the Best (student guide)

"For condoms to be used properly, over 10 specific steps must be followed every time. This tends to minimize the romance and spontaneity of the sex act."

WAIT Training (workshop manual)

"What if a girl came to school in a crop top, just barely covering her bra, and shorts starting three inches below her naval? What 'game' would she be playing?"

Source: www.siecus.org

AIDS Groups Protest Data Collection

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

National AIDS and HIV groups are expressing a growing concern about plans by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to establish a new set of data collection requirements for federally funded HIV prevention efforts.

The data collection program, called the Program Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS), will mandate the reporting of highly personal information about every person who participates in federally funded HIV prevention programs.

"Collecting data for PEMS will mean less time for HIV prevention counseling, could put people with HIV at risk for criminal prosecution, and won't actually tell us whether HIV

I am what most people would term elderly. I am neither inexperienced nor stupid – and I write as a woman not a man – and I am financially independent. I enjoy sex and what goes with it, sexual relations. As an “older woman,” I’ll try to tell you what I like to get and give.



BY AMANDA DAVIS

I want lots of touching – old-fashioned petting, kissing, stroking, licking ears, finger tips, nipples – just plain skin to skin. I don’t care if the partner is young or old, handsome or not, big or small in stature or endowment. I have experimented with sex with a woman and decided it was not for me.

So – sex after 70, or even after 80. Best if you have other things that you enjoy together

– word games, shared laughter (especially if you can laugh at yourself). Time together to find the things that bind you. Comfort – as you grow older the joints don’t work as well and you can’t expect sex in the backseat of a car to be fun. But make it fun – there are ways to do it.

Appreciate all of the senses. Sight: Don’t be afraid to look at him and let him look at you. You might not be what you were at 70, 60, 50 or younger. He might not be as ugly, or

you as unattractive, as you think. Smell: We all send off sexually attractive smells – young and old. Taste: Use your tongue on all parts of him and encourage him to do the same. Sound: Maybe you don’t sing (I do), but read poetry together or listen to music. Try making love to a Beethoven sonata, using the rhythms and sounds for fun.

Many things still make me want to take a lover. At 81, I am still in love with sex and with giving and receiving love. When I was

young, I was not able to attract males (I was too smart and unable to conceal it). I had my first boyfriend and first sexual experience at about 17. Later, I learned that I was sexy and how to use it. I didn’t really have a lot of sex but I was wanted (maybe even wanton) and I enjoyed the power my sexuality gave me.

What I seek now is someone who can laugh (at himself and help me laugh at myself), who is sensual in all ways (if only just a little bit in some), who loves music, who is politically liberal (this is important for me), who needs me and understands my needing him. All of this has to come together with an ability to express caring, not just physically, but a little bit verbally. I would like this person to understand my aches and pains (and I expect to understand his) and to know that love is the first prerequisite for a relationship that includes sex. Granted, you can have sex without love or caring but it won’t be anything more satisfactory than emptying your bladder or a good shit.

Over the years, my feelings about sex have changed because I found it pleasurable and didn’t have to be afraid of becoming pregnant (thanks to an operation after bearing five children) and my mind overcame the prejudices of what women should feel and do.

I think one can find good sex without “love” but it will be fleeting. For it to be good over a span of time, there must be more than just orgasms.

I just spent ten days with a person I met purely by accident – wrong number from opposite ends of the country. I went to meet him and had a quiet relationship with a man I had only spoken to on the phone. We had very good sex but a wonderful part of it was holding hands watching an old movie, going to bed, holding one another, talking, learning one another’s past. I read the books he had in the house and found things I should have read sooner. I hope when he visits me there will be things in my books and movies and music collection he learns from.

I don’t think this will be the love affair of the millennium or even the century, but after 14 months of mourning for my beloved partner and trying to satisfy my sexual longings by masturbation and other means, I am willing to have a friendship (with sex) that is not all year long, a love affair that recognizes the (physical) distance between. He is quite a bit younger than I (16 years) but I’m in good physical shape (better than he) and we like each other!

I cannot say anything about sex for a man over 70 but for a woman who would like to be alive for as long as she is alive – do it!!!!

Memoirs of an Ass-Kicker

BY KELLY ZEN-YIE TSAI

One day, you will be... geisha.

I’m so over this recycled wet dream of subservient Asian women waiting for white male liberators, whether they be G.I.’s, “samurais” or American authors.

Believe me, fools, we don’t need you to save us or to write our stories.

Every river has its source, and what we see manifest today flows from the past. From Lucy Liu’s bondage-laced back-walking to the percentage of Asian Pacific Islander American women dating or marrying outside of the race, our histories lead us back to who we presently are.

Sure, some people may “just really like dark hair and dark eyes” or “can’t find anyone else they’re attracted to.” But I think there is a feedback loop between Western fetishization of Asian-American women and our own internalized racism, that “white is right,” a perception stemming from our home countries where U.S. dollars and decisions continue to dominate.

As much as *Kama Sutra* references may drive us nuts here, the truly insidious nature of “Asian Fetish Syndrome” can be found among our sistas in Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, China and beyond where Western men take advantage of global poverty to get off.

No wonder the women in the movies are always sex machines. No wonder they never speak. No wonder they cater to every desire. No wonder they are always so grateful.

I don’t know. It must be an Asian thing.

This lazy masturbatory thinking pushes the dehumanization of Asian and Asian-American women forward because it’s con-



venient. It’s more convenient than owning up to how history impacts us today. It’s more convenient than recognizing how the haves exploit the have nots. It’s more convenient than asking Asian and Asian-American women what they think, experience and feel. “Well, hell,” Arthur Golden (*Memoirs of a Geisha* author) must have thought, “might as well write their story for them.”

I haven’t read the book. I haven’t seen the movie. I don’t plan to. I would rather spend my time experiencing real Asian-American women

like Grace Lee Boggs, who fought for labor rights in Detroit, Yuri Kochiyama who cradled Malcolm X in her arms as he died, Jessica Hagedorn, who was one of Ntozake Shange’s original “For Colored Girls...,” and Jhumpa Lahiri who told the truth about the life of immigrants in *The Interpreter of Maladies*.

Yes, my sistas, what do we all have to say about that?

Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai (inset) is a Chinese Taiwanese American spoken word artist based in Brooklyn and Chicago. www.yellowgurl.com

Banji Boys and Girlfriends on the Down Low

BY LEO PARDE

Don't laugh but my roommate is probably giving your banji boyfriend head as we speak. Me, I'm listening to your girlfriend's message asking me if I'm available to take her places you can't. Both enjoy a little known place called intimacy without submission and ownership. So how is it, in the age of mass globalization, where fascism masquerades as capitalism, my roommate and I offer a free service that most couples can't provide to their partners? It's easy. We both sell intimacy without commitment. Drop-in whenever you want, but make sure you call first – remedy for a millennium. Sex is still the high card over consumerism.

Sure there's a downside to our style of living. Both sinks leak from sex parties where couples have not only banged the kitchen sink out of alignment but have christened the kitchen floor a love pit. Our bathroom medicine cabinet hangs loose from the wall – one person's passionate attempt at gaining more leverage. Having sex on sinks is kinky, don't ask me why. All I know is that I'm the designated plumber.

As for your girlfriend, I don't mind having a good time switch hitting. I find women get excited when you give them the keys to your car and let them drive. Especially when the trip is all about them. Drama is your partner's



job; my place is to please – it's my manly duty. P.S. The Golden Rule: Nothing leaves the bedroom. Absolutely nothing. That's where most people screw up. Also, I never do married women.

However, my roommate is another story. He gives good head, so I hear. The walls are kind of thin. And he also switch hits. This is how the sinks got broken. I don't remember the mirror. I find it best not to remember names. I do know when to split until the coast is clear. It has become second nature, and it makes my roommate's life easier. Down Lows spook like horses; very skittish, and need a tight rein. It took me a while to get used to their shyness. Now most of them when size me up when they see me, wondering which way I go, which is not their business. The beauty of the apartment arrangement between my roommate and myself is that neither your banji boy nor your girlfriends will ever get close enough to take a picture. No cameras allowed in this courtroom.

Some people might think that the lack of a long relationship might be cause for some sort of psychological underpinning. However, that's the kind of analysis you'd get from someone who's either not getting enough, hasn't experienced good sex, or has been reading too much Freud. New York City is really twisted. If you're looking for a relationship (as in marriage) we suggest you go to Jersey or Long Island. If, however, you have decided to ride the roller coaster known as the City, we suggest the "buddy system." In God's love we deliver.



American Family or 'Anti-Fag' Association

The Conservative Right's Schoolyard Bully Meets The Progressive Market's Purchasing Muscle

BY DAVID JASPER

At the end of January NBC canceled its new series, *The Book of Daniel*, after only four episodes. The program featured two openly gay characters. Many stations throughout the nation had initially refused to carry the show. The Christian right's American Family Association (AFA) threatened to boycott advertisers who promoted products during the show's airtime. They claimed to have gotten more than 600,000 emails sent to NBC to protest the contents of this program. Although NBC stated that "The Book of Daniel" was cancelled due to poor ratings, the AFA claimed the cancellation as a campaign victory.

The AFA has also been in discussions with Ford to sever ties with gay community markets. Since May 2005, AFA has been threatening a boycott if talks failed to produce results. In early December, the AFA claimed that it forced Ford to cancel ads that it had planned to run with LGBT media. Indeed Ford had notified gay media outlets, through its ad agency, that it was withdrawing ads for its Jaguar and Land Rover brands around the same time that the AFA had pressured Ford.

In mid-December Ford reversed this decision after meeting with more than 19 LGBT civil rights groups in Washington, including the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. A Ford spokesperson claimed that the termination of advertising relationships with gay-oriented media was simply a "business decision" and that conservative Christian groups played no role in cutting these ads. However, after meeting with gay and lesbian rights advocates, Ford stated that it would advertise not only Land Rover, Jaguar and Volvo with LGBT media outlets, as it had previously done, but all Ford brands. In early January, the AFA threatened Ford with another boycott if the decision is not reversed.

During 2004, the American Family Association and Focus on the Family boycotted Procter and Gamble because of its support to repeal a law in Cincinnati that prevented the city from enacting legislation banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. The AFA alleged that it was able to gain 300,000 people not to purchase P&G products because of the company's stance. P&G said that it would not advocate discrimination regardless of the boycott. Similar boycott threats have occurred to both Kraft Foods, for its sponsorship of the 2006 Gay Games, and Disney over Gay Days at Disney World.

Let Gays Marry – For All of Us

BY JOYCE MARCEL

Here's a rock-solid truth that our culture tries to deny: We don't choose the people we love. Love chooses us. As Bob Dylan recognized, "It falls on strangers, travels free."

Same-sex couples know this truth. How many are born masochistic enough to "choose" homosexuality – to be preached against, humiliated, ostracized, beaten up, occasionally murdered and, on the up side, get a job making straight people attractive – these are life goals? Sometimes men fall in love with men. Sometimes, after that, they fall in love with women. Sometimes women fall in love with women. Sometimes women fall in love with women but eventually marry – and love – men. It's all one great big love stew.

Given this basic truth, why are so many people outraged by gay marriage? How could it "change marriage as we know it?" What are these fools thinking?

Myra Marx Ferree, a professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has a chilling answer. Ferree argues that right-wing Christian opposition to gay marriage is an attack on all marriages, and that a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union strictly between a man and a woman could have the power to destroy heterosexual marriages as we know them today.

The amendment, she points out, is based on a simple and false premise: that marriage has always been the same – biblical, if you will. But marriage has taken many forms over the centuries, and Ferree describes three American models.

The first is pre-Industrial Age patriarchy.

"It assumes men are heads of households and women are property the husband owns, lacking any rights to earn an income, own property or even have custody of children," she said.

Then comes industrialization, taking such things as food, clothing, medicine and soap production out of the home and putting them in offices and factories. Along with this comes the struggle for women's emancipation.

Social conservatives of the time argued that if women had the right to vote, inherit property, earn money and have opinions different from their husbands, they would leave their husbands and it would be the end of marriage.

Marriage didn't end, however. It changed. In general, men took up the role of "provider," leaving home every day to earn a paycheck. Women became "homemakers," – "specialists in raising children and providing domestic comforts."

This was better, but not the best. Wives legally owed domestic support to their husbands and could not be paid for their work at home. Husbands owed their wives financial support; they had to pay alimony if the marriage broke up. The husband had the right to his wife's sex, so there could be no such thing as marital rape. The woman had the right of custody of the children, so there could be no joint custody.

In the modern world, marriages are partnerships. Women and men both work – and are paid equally (under law, if not always in the real world). They both vote, have bank accounts and credit, and share in child-raising and child custody.

Contemporary marriage, like a Cantonese restaurant menu, allows couples to choose

their own style: backward to the patriarchal, staying with the provider/homemaker model, or entering into a working partnership. If religious conservatives win their fight to define marriage as between a man and a woman, Ferree warns, they might not stop there.

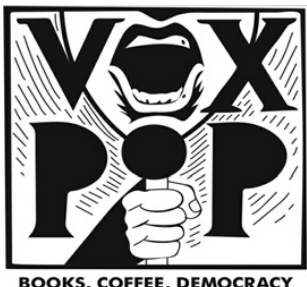
We find ourselves now in a strange period of what might be called attempted Christian Fascism. Our president believes God has called him to the White House (it certainly wasn't the popular vote). Empowered by Bush, evangelical Christians are pushing for a rollback of Darwin, the end of scientific experimentation, and the coming of Armageddon. The hallowed American separation of church and state has never been more under attack. The goal is the creation of a Christian nation – and later a Christian world – under biblical law.

So after a constitutional amendment, the next logical step would be defining the roles of men and women in heterosexual marriages according to biblical standards. Can you hear the patriarchy calling?

We don't choose who we love, and that's the truth. But most of us do love, and we can choose how we love.

If we don't want to see women forced to walk two steps behind their husbands, if we don't want to see them lose the right to vote, to work, to have credit and to own property, if we don't want to live in an anti-democratic and insanely fundamentalist country, then we must all fight for the right of homosexuals to marry.

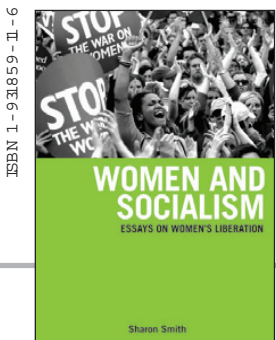
A longer version of this article originally appeared on commondreams.org



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Women and Socialism locates the source of women's oppression in class society, arguing that only a movement integrating the fight for women's liberation with a struggle against a system that puts profit above human needs can end women's oppression—along with all other forms of inequality.

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"Sharon Smith's work spanning three decades of event affecting women, provides a valuable and uncommon perspective on the oppression and liberation of women... the accessible writing and incisive assessment of the movements' gains and losses are indispensable for activists fighting for women's liberation today"
Dana Cloud, University of Texas

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When Porn Was (kinda) Sweet

Score
dir. Radley Metzger
Verso, 2005

Today's pornography industry, while never regaining the playful spirit of its 1970's heyday, has proven itself continually successful. Blame the decimating impact of AIDS, the conversion from film to video, widespread plastic surgery, or 30+ years of cultural change—whatever the cause, most porn today feels hungover and listless, as if nothing could be less fun than sexual activity.

Not that porn from the past is always enjoyable, but few porn filmmakers (beyond the brilliant if problematic Russ Meyer) ever bothered to push their films toward artistry.

In his best films (*Score*, *The Lickerish Quartet*, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*), Radley Metzger achieves a kind of playful art-porn grandeur. In Metzger's world, sex becomes the common denominator, and he glosses over any distinctions of class, race or sexual orientation: All that matters is each character's ability.

Score (1973) captures a now-inconceivable swinging 70s utopia: Elvira (Claire Wilbur) and Jack (Gerald Grant) are a happy couple competing to see who can first seduce the sexually naïve Betsy (Lynn Mowry) and Eddie (Casey Donovan). Not too unusual a setup, but the trick here is that Jack wants Eddie and Elvira wants Betsy, leading to a film that truly offers (as the ads claimed) "something for everyone." After Elvira has Betty photograph her screwing local handyman Mike (Carl Parker), the couples share a joint and play dress-up: Jack the sailor, Eddie the cowboy, Elvira the nun and innocent Betsy, the dominatrix.



THE BIG SCORE: Trying to make art when the market demands stroke has been fiddled with for decades. Radley Metzger's films still have the power to amuse, and the polysexuality is something San Fernando's Porn Vally still can't handle.

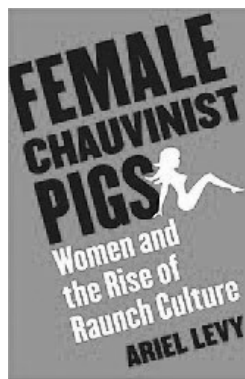
A War Done Well

The White Countess
Directed by James Ivory 2005

The *White Countess*, set in 1936 Shanghai, relates the story of a diplomat and League of Nations functionary who is blinded in a violent incident and whose wife and young daughter are killed. With the assistance of a Japanese acquaintance, the bereft diplomat opens a bar offering women hostesses, jazz and song and

You've gone the wrong way, baby

Female Chauvinist Pigs:
Women & the Rise of Raunch Culture
Free Press, 2005
By Ariel Levy



Try as they might, women will never be "one of the guys," argues Ariel Levy, and women should not pretend that appropriating sexist behavior will give them a leg up. In *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*, Levy prods the definition of feminism, asking if women who align themselves with male chauvinism are really empowered, or if women who bare all for *Girls Gone Wild*, watch *The Man Show*, and go to strip clubs, are doing themselves a disservice and reversing years of feminist progress.

For those well schooled in feminist thinking, the book will be a reread in certain areas, such as the chapter on the history of the women's movement and the splintering off of "sex-positive feminists." Levy herself is against porn, a bias that comes across clearly in an otherwise fairly even-handed chronicle of events.

The same-sex couples split off for a long seduction sequence, brilliantly cross-cut by Metzger, to where the men get Warholian fetishized images projected on their bodies, the women lose themselves in a mirrored tent bed and everyone takes amyl nitrate (how quaint!). Inhibitions drop away as fantasy, memory and identity blur in a whirlwind of rhythmic making out (as Metzger prefers, the hardcore shots are cut from the DVD) before Betsy and Eddie depart, now trained seducers themselves.

Adapted from an off-Broadway parody of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff?*, *Score*'s consistently witty script, Hefner-ski-lodge décor, and perfect cast are a treat. Cult legend Mowry (who's worked with Cronenberg and Romero) might be porn's ideal naïf, and the hilariously brazen Claire Wilbur is empowerment incarnate. Like a dirty cross between James Whale and Josef Von Sternberg, Metzger is a master

of framing his characters to illuminate private meanings and desires while never passing judgment on them, save those too square to let loose and ... the whole room. It's hard not to admire a film where one character says of her husband: "I like everyone here except him because he won't take his pants off." Never less than wholly charming, *Score* is pure adulterated joy.

—CHARLIE BASS

Crunchy Granola Porn

hippiegoddess.com

Tired of generic porn sites and their increasingly brutal aesthetic? Maybe it's time for a mellow walk through the woods with the scantily clad young women at hippiegoddess.com, which boasts of offering "the internet's ONLY exclusively erotic alternative unshaven hippie girl nudes."

Posing on the beach in Santa Cruz and in their natural habitat in the woods outside of Portland, Oregon, these dreadlocked beauties don't bother to shave their armpits much less their pubes. Nor do they splay their snatches, wag their booties, do penetration shots or affect the fuck-me look so common to internet porn.

More often than not, they seem lost in thought as they meditate, curl up in a tree branch, stare off into their leafy surroundings or putter around at water's edge. You can almost smell the sage and the patchouli.

Gazing at these young wood nymphs, a sense of appreciation for their natural beauty eventually gives way to a desire for communion that cannot be fulfilled. This is still a porn site and these goddesses a commodity—if you want to look at more than a handful of the 10,000 plus images you have to pay \$24.95 per month. In the end, even the most

The other chapters cover milder but pervasive sexual trends entrenched so deeply in our culture that they have become a normalized part of the mainstream: 12-year old girls in thongs and t-shirts that declare "Feeling lucky?"; wielding casual sex as a power tool instead of a means of affection and pleasure; and the expansion of the Playboy empire.

In her chapter, "From Womyn to Bois" Levy delves beyond the mainstream into boi culture in lesbian circles—adopting the look of a teenaged

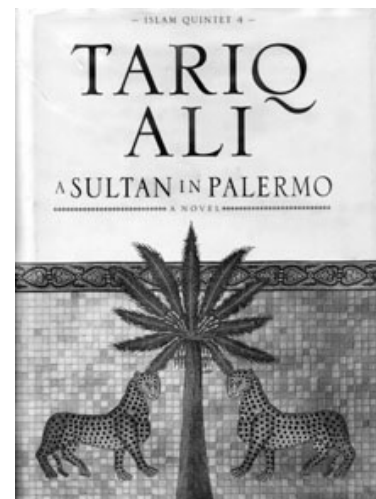
boy and an aggressive, noncommittal sexual ethos.

Female Chauvinist Pigs will make readers question the norms of our society, and how we arrived at a paradoxical point where Jenna Jameson writes a bestseller but teenagers are taught abstinence-only sex ed. Levy points a lot of fingers without pointing toward solutions, and men are left out of the picture—a man who does not agree with chauvinist thinking is never mentioned. Largely, though, this is a fast and thought-provoking slice of feminist lite.

—ERICA PATINO

exquisite photos are an empty substitute for the sublime joy of holding a beautiful hippie girl you love in your arms.

—ARTHUR JONES



The Mash of Civilizations

The Sultan of Palermo
By Tariq Ali
Verso, 2005

For anyone who thinks Arab culture is, was and always will be reactionary and intensely misogynistic, Tariq Ali's latest novel ("A Sultan in Palermo") is a refreshing read. Set in 12th century Sicily, the novel follows the life and loves of the great medieval cartographer Muhammad al-Idrisi at a time when the island is ruled by a Norman king but dominated by a sensual, pleasure-loving Arab culture. Stoked by ambitious Christian clerics, the "clash of civilizations" that builds up speed in this book will also be disturbingly familiar to anyone who follows today's headlines.

—JOHN TARLETON

In the meantime, the world is in a very scary place.

5 Easy Steps to Romance on a Dime

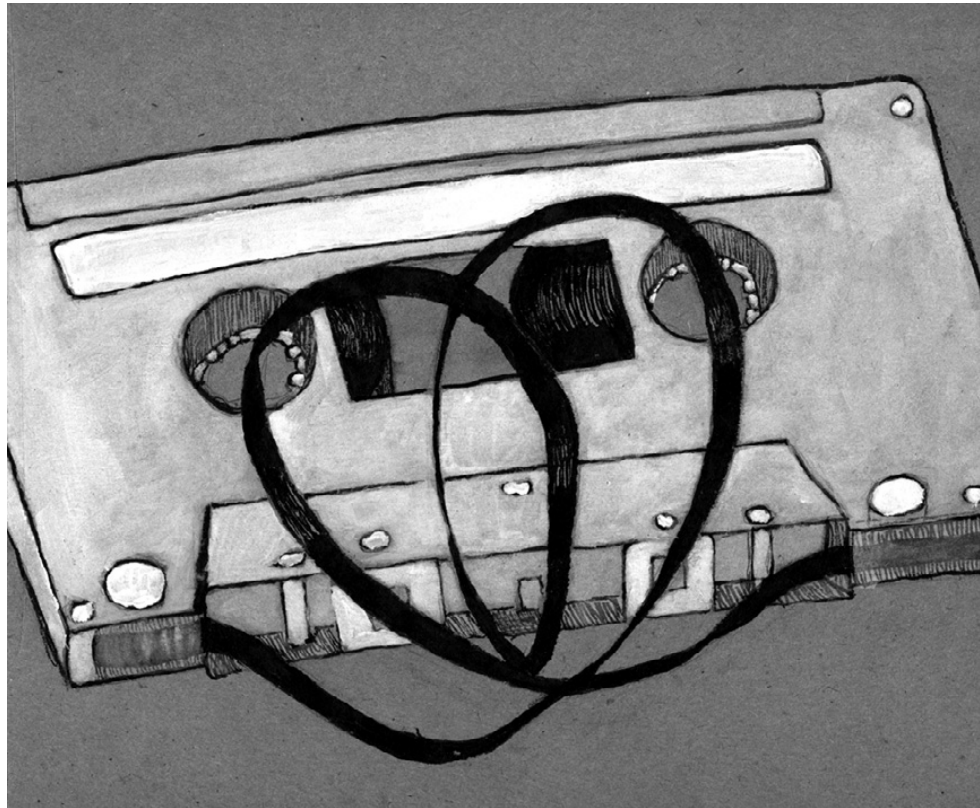
If you can't buy true love, how do you romance someone on a real-life budget in this big-spending city? Readers of the *Independent* rose to the challenge. Below are the best of the open submissions.

No. 1: First Date Bait

Free gallery openings, literary readings and panel discussions are perfect opportunities to explore your interests together, while boozin' and snackin' for free! Try the galleries and spaces nearest your favorite neighborhoods to hang out in. A few faves of ours include **The Jonathan LeVine Gallery** at 529 West 20th Street and **Deitch Projects** at 76 Grand Street. **Bloom Publications** is a good place for literary readings, with the stock of wine and cheese a'plenty. Nothing beats an open bar, so check out **MyOpenBar.com** and find out whose schlocking the free booze. Don't forget to look for the letter F (for "free") when browsing local papers for events!

No. 2: The Explorer Special

In early spring take the **Staten Island Ferry** for, that's right, free! The ferry is enclosed and cruises right past Lady Liberty. If the weather is favorable, venture to **Schnacks** in Red Hook where you can treat your crush for under five dollars with its dollar PBRs and tasty tofu rueben sandwiches! After, take a stroll to the **Red Hook piers** and not only peep the water under an open sky, but take in street art from the likes of Swoon and others. Another great place to enjoy open space is on the corner of North 3rd and the East River in Williamsburg. Climb over piles of rubble and be greeted by the Manhattan skyline. Enjoy quiet conversation while dangling your feet over the edge of a concrete wall above the water — just don't jump in!



No. 3: Adult Swim

Head out to **Coney Island** with your couch cushion change and win your shnuckems a stuffed animal! Bring a blanket for catching rays and cards or other games to spend quality time under the sun. All you need is train fare, or a bicycle and the stamina to ride it down Ocean Parkway.

No. 4: The Great Romance

Take a walk across the **Brooklyn Bridge** at sunset, stopping midway for the view and a perfect chance to plant a kiss. Proceed to the **Promenade** and plant a few more! In mid-late April, go to Brooklyn's **Prospect Park** when the magnolia trees are losing all their flowers. Bring a camera and build a soft and fluffy bed

of flower petals. Photograph your sweetie for posterity or just lie there with your special someone, watching the clouds drift by. Or do the same under the **cherry trees at the Central Park Reservoir** with its convenient access to the **Rambles** behind Belvedere Castle on the Great Lawn. During the summer, you can also head to **Summer Stage** and enjoy free music outdoors. Don't forget your water bottle because unfortunately, that ain't free (or cheap!).

No. 5: The Ultimate Heart Winner

Make your crush a **mixtape** and play it for him/her. No matter where you could have taken your sweetie, free booze or not, nothing says "I'm into you" more than a hand picked selection of songs. Mmm hmm.

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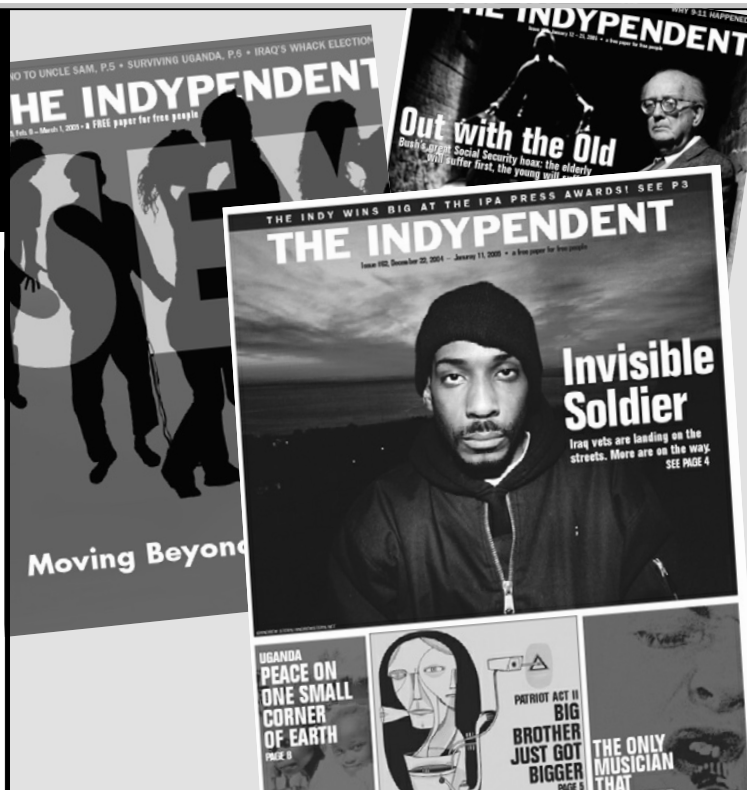
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472 Atlantic Ave.

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Veggie Castle

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Make the Road by Walking

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Cafe Bar

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Broadway Library

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Indykids@indymedia.org

Now thru Feb. 18

STORIES FROM HOME: LA CIUDAD OCULTA

Exhibit by young photographers of the PH15 Foundation from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Art for Change, 1701 Lexington Ave (btw 106th & 107th Sts)

www.artforchange.org

Now thru Feb. 28

AMADOU DIALLO: HIS LIFE AND DEATH IN ART

Commemorating the seventh anniversary of Diallo's death on Feb. 4, 1999, ten paintings about his life, death, and contributions by artists including Eric Alugas, Shawn Walker and Katrina Jeffries, plus 20 photographs by Jim Carroll of Diallo's funeral procession.

Casa Frela Gallery, 47 W 119th St. (btw Lenox & Madison)

www.casafrela.com/gallery

Saturday, Feb. 11

10am-6pm • \$20 adults, \$5 21 and under, \$30 at the door

NYC GRASSROOTS MEDIA CONFERENCE

A projected 1,000 students, activists, mediamakers, community workers and artists will convene for more than 40 workshops, do-it-yourself trainings, discussions, panels, art exhibitions and films.

The New School, 65 5th Ave @ 13th

www.nycgrassrootsmedia.org

8pm • \$12 gen./\$9 members (n/o turned away)

MUSIC: PEOPLES' VOICE CAFE WITH HARMONIC INSURGENCE

Songs for an unsettled world.

The Workmen's Circle, 45 East 33rd St. (btw Madison & Park) www.peoplesvoicecafe.org

Sunday, Feb. 12

1:30pm • free

FILM: INVISIBLE BALLOTS: A TEMPTATION FOR ELECTRONIC VOTER FRAUD

This film exposes the world of all-electronic computerized voting & the potential for fraud with Teresa Hommel of NYers for Verified Voting.

Community Church, Assembly Hall, 40 E 35th St (btw Park & Madison)

nyceducation@notinourname.net

www.nycnotinourname.net

2pm-7pm • \$10

SWAP-O-RAMA-RAMA

A seasonal clothing swap and series of do-it-yourself workshops in which a community explores creative reuse through the recycling of used clothing. Bring a bag of your unwanted clothes; all workshop and DIY materials are provided.

Galapagos Art Space, 70 N 6th btw Wythe & Kent, Bklyn

www.swaporamarama.org.

6:30 pm • \$9/\$6.50 (s/s)

COMING UP SHORT: WOMEN AND SEXUALITY FILM SERIES

Hot and Bothered: Feminist Pornography (Becky Goldberg) Women making pornography with feminist values, who go up against an entire industry.

Silence: In Search of Black Female Sexuality in America (Mya B.) Street interviews juxtaposed with academics and religious leaders talking about black sexuality, historically shrouded in silence.

In Her Image: Producing Womanhood in America (Julia Barry) The roots and meanings of the images and messages that

bombard us, representing and shaping women's lives.

Pioneer Theater, 155 E 3rd St.

Monday, Feb. 13

6:30pm-8:30pm • FREE

MEETING: WOMEN'S LIBERATION BIRTH CONTROL PROJECT

Have you faced obstacles in getting the morning-after pill or birth control? Have you had trouble getting guys to wear condoms? We will compare experiences to figure out how the personal is political and how to best fight back.

Office of Raff & Becker, 470 Park Ave (btw 31st & 32nd), 3rd floor

birthcontrolproject@gmail.com

www.birthcontrolproject.org

Tuesday, Feb. 14

7pm • FREE

READING: TRISTAN TAORMINO "VALENTINE'S DAY EROS"

Selections from *Best Lesbian & Gay Erotica 2006*. Round out your Valentine's Day with some literary smut from all corners of the gender dance-floor, w/Eric(a) Maroney, Skian McGuire, Zaedryn Meade, Kyle Walker, Sam J Miller, Thorn Kief Hillsbery & Round out your Valentines's Day with some literary smut with Eric(a) Maroney, Skian McGuire, Zaedryn Mead, Kyle Walker, Sam J. Miller, Thorn Kief Hillsbery and Tim Doody. Bring a date or come solo & meet other similarly sex-obsessed singles.

Bluestockings, 172 Allen St @ Stanton

www.bluestockings.com

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT TO THE INDYPENDENT IT'S FREE

Wednesday, Feb. 15

7pm • \$3

BLACK WOMEN OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Discussion w/ Dr. Susan Williams speaking on trailblazers like Zora Neale Hurston, Billie Holiday, Josephine Baker, Agelina Weld Grimke.

Freedom Hall, 113 W 128th St. (btw Malcolm X & Adam Clayton Powell Blvds, 2/3, 4/5/6, A/B/C/D to 125th St. Info/childcare: 212-222-0633,

www.radicalwomen.org

9pm • FREE

EVENT: TRIBECA/SOHO/CHINATOWN TRASH TRAILBLAZE

Join us as we return to the old neighborhood for the first time in years to learn what Lower Manhattan is throwing away. Unlike our trash tours, which guarantee an abundant haul of wasted, useable goods, Trash Trailblazing is a treasure-hunting adventure where we never know what we might (or might not) find. This event is not open to the media.

Meet at Hudson Square Cafe (Canal/Hudson)

Thursday, Feb. 16

5:30pm-7:30pm • Sliding Scale: \$55-\$75
**INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE AND
MOBILIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA**

5-session class w/ Gerardo Renique will explore the trajectory of indigenous struggle and resistance from independence to the present, examining modes of indigenous resistance to colonialism, capitalist expansion and the formation of the liberal state; struggle for land in Mexico and the Andean countries, and neo-liberalism and free trade.

The Brecht Forum, 451 West St.

www.brechtforum.org

7pm • FREE

FILM/DISCUSSION: 30 YEARS OF SISTERHOOD: WOMEN IN THE 1970S WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN JAPAN

W/ Chieko Yamagami & Noriko Seyama (filmmakers), Yoko Akiyama (Surugadai U), Yumi Doi (writer), Soko Miki (Kyoto Seika U), Keith Vincent (NYU). In Eng & Japanese.

LGBT Community Center, 208 W 13th St (btw 7th & 9th Aves.)

www.gaycenter.org &

sisterhoodjapan.blogspot.com

7pm • FREE

AMERICA'S MILITARY TODAY: THE CHALLENGE OF MILITARISM

Forum with Tod Ensign (Exec Dir of Citizen Soldier), Jim Murphy (Veterans for Peace), Job Mashariki (Black Veterans for Social Justice).

CUNY Grad Center, 34th St & 5th Ave, Rm. 5414.

Info: 718-624-5921, bfp@brooklynpeace.org

Friday, Feb 17

4:30pm • FREE

ACTION/VGIL FOR A JUST PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Street theater, masked performance, art & song, concluding w/ a candlelight vigil to honor the lives of people who have been affected by the violence in Sri Lanka. Vigils also in London, Toronto & other cities.

1st Ave btw 42d & 43d Sts (opposite U.N.

Secretariat Building)

Saturday, Feb. 18 and 21

Sat. at 2pm & Tues. 21 at 6:50pm

BEST OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL

Faces of Change: Grassroots activists find a voice. From five different countries, the videos capture the hopes and dreams that echo each other across the five countries. Winner: ADFF 2005 Public Award for the Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color. Q&A with filmmaker to follow.

BAM, 30 Lafayette Ave. btw Ashland Place & St.

Felix • silverdocs.com/2005/films/faces.aspx

8pm • \$12 general/\$9 members (n/o turned away)

MUSIC: PEOPLES' VOICE CAFÉ WITH LEGACY (ZENOBIA, JAQUE DUPREE & BEN SILVER); DONAL LEACE

The Workmen's Circle, 45 East 33rd St. (btw

Madison & Park)

www.peoplesvoicecafe.org

10am-5pm, each session \$125

PAPER TIGER TV OFFERS A TWO-DAY INTENSIVE TO LEARN FINAL CUT PRO!

Session 1. basics of digital video editing – transfer footage from your camera to the computer, edit your video, and output it back to tape. Session 2. integrate tool bar functions, basic audio editing, advanced titling, import titles from Photoshop, use simple effects and import music from a CD. All classes are first come, first served and require payment to reserve space. Classes limited to 6 students per session. 339 Lafayette St • jen@papertiger.org

Tuesday, Feb. 21

7pm • \$9/6.50

FILM: MARDI GRAS, MADE IN CHINA

First-time director David Redmon illuminates the clash of cultures by juxtaposing American excess and consumer ignorance with the harsh life of the Chinese factory worker. A dialogue results when bead-wearing partiers are shown images of the teen Chinese workers, while the factory girls view pictures of Americans decadently celebrating.

Pioneer Theater, 155 E 3rd St

Wednesday, Feb. 22-26

FILM: GRANITO DE ARENA

The story of hundreds of thousands of public schoolteachers who have endured brutal repression in their 25-year struggle for social & economic justice in Mexico's public schools. W/ filmmaker Jill Freidberg (*This Is What Democracy Looks Like*, 2000) at all events.

22nd at 6pm: Teachers College, Columbia U, 525 W 120th St, Milbank Chapel. 24th at 6:30pm: Center for Worker Education, 99 Hudson St, 6th fl; \$2 suggested. 26th at 7pm: Union Pool, 484 Union Ave, Bkln, \$5-\$10 sliding scale (age 21 & over only). www.corrugate.org

Thursday, Feb. 23 & Friday, Feb. 24

9pm • Free

PERFORMANCE: THE SOUND OF MAGIC

Deitch Projects is pleased to present the Legendary Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black with their new show. Filled with classic rock, punk energy, and the group's signature and memorable visual language, *The Sound of Magic* will be performed in tandem with the release of the new limited edition vinyl picture LP by the same name and promises to be one of the groups most ambitious works to date.

Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St.



ON THE STREET

by Erin Siegal